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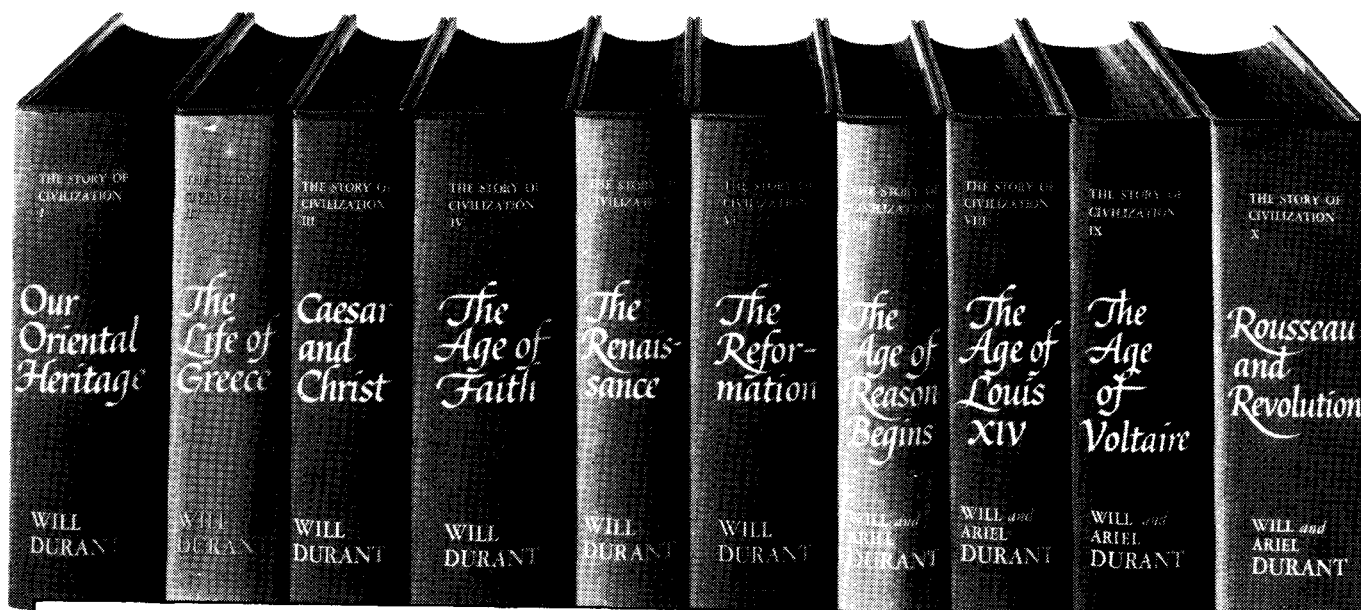


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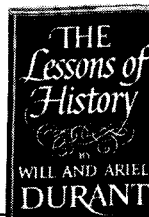
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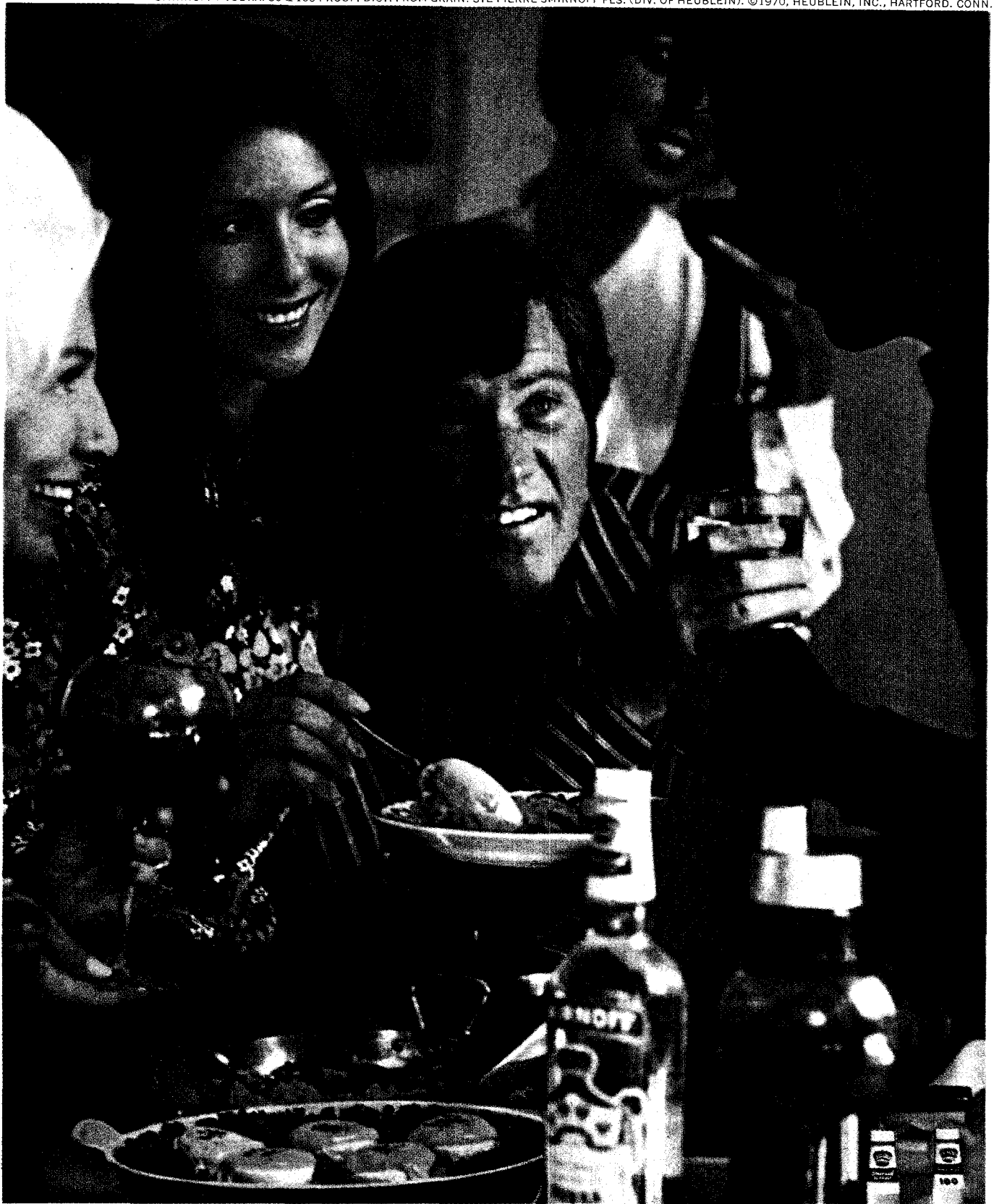
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THE EDITOR'S PAGE

The poetry of L. E. Sissman should be familiar to readers of the *Atlantic*, and henceforth you will have opportunity to enjoy the prose side of the many-sided Mr. Sissman. On page 22 we inaugurate his occasional column, *Innocent Bystander*. It records the observations and reflections of a gentle man who has made it up the slope to early middle age (forty-two, in his case) and finds himself as often bemused as disturbed by what he sees going on below him, above him, and across the way.

Born in Detroit, Ed Sissman came East, where he survived a Harvard education. He has lived in the East since, and now resides with his wife in Still River, Massachusetts, an amiable commuting distance from Boston, where he works as creative director in an advertising agency when he is not composing some of the wittiest and most pleasing poetry of the day. Some seventy-five of his poems have appeared in magazines and in two books, and a third volume is soon to



L. E. Sissman

appear. For one Sissman fan's comment, see the bouquet from the aficionado S. J. Perelman, as quoted, quite coincidentally, in this issue (page 108).

One day in 1967, a young man in a Navy pea jacket walked into the *Atlantic's* offices and left an envelope containing three manuscripts with the receptionist. They were among the best short stories that had come to us in a long time. The author proved to be a shy, modest man of twenty-four, a native of Savannah, Georgia, who had worked at a multitude of jobs, among them newsboy, dining-car waiter, research assistant at a university, and janitor. He was finishing at Harvard Law School but deciding that he wanted, not to practice law, but to write. We published the first stories; they were followed by enough to fill a book, *Hue and Cry*, which launched James Alan McPherson as one of the most promising writers of many years and won him a 1970 Award of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. He is a contributing editor of the *Atlantic*, and in recent years has mixed work on a novel with teaching and with reporting for the *Atlantic*. He lives in Berkeley, California.

One of the writers who inspired James McPherson was Ralph Ellison, and Ellison in turn was struck by McPherson's talent. Ellison wrote, "He promises to move right past those talented but misguided writers of Negro-American cultural background who take being black as a privilege for being obscenely second-rate and who regard their social predicament as Negroes as exempting them from the necessity of mastering the craft

and forms of fiction." It was inevitable that McPherson and Ellison would meet. Their correspondence and long conversations combine to make a remarkable profile of Ellison as man and writer beginning on page 45, a project initiated by McPherson and to which Ellison responded with fullness and candor. Said McPherson when the job was done, "I cannot tell you how much I have learned from the man."



James Alan McPherson

To give the "Indivisible Man" his additional due, we commissioned the distinguished photographer, novelist (and now, movie producer) Gordon Parks to provide the cover portrait.

Coming Events:

Don't Paint It Like Disneyland: what it's like on the automobile assembly line, by William Serrin.

The Nuclear Politburo, an inquiry into the power and responsibilities of the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission, by Paul Jacobs.

Canada 1971, a Canadian's assessment of a nation that is feeling its muscles—but also its pains—by John Hamilton.

Robert Manning

*I suppose I've passed it a hundred times,
but I always stop for a minute
And look at the house, the tragic house,
the house with nobody in it.*

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REPORTS & COMMENT

REPORT FROM WASHINGTON

His name is a blur in the headlines and only a faint blip on the radar screen scrutinizing Democratic presidential contenders. In an assemblage of cool, cautious men, Senator William Proxmire, Democrat of Wisconsin, stands out as a zealot, a Strom Thurmond of the left. In an age of instant, indelible branding by the media, his is a saga of redemption, a testament to the importance of being earnest. In the past thirteen years, he has moved up from being almost universally disdained in the Senate to a position in which he enjoys near-unanimous respect. And at least the amiable curiosity of passersby who see him jogging down Connecticut Avenue each morning.

In heat wave, hailstorm, or blizzard, every day he runs the 4.7 miles from his home in northwest Washington to the Capitol. Proxmire's daily journey is surely metaphorical, for he has been engaged in a long-distance competition with some of the more durable American problems: the economy, housing, defense spending, and proposals like public funding of a supersonic transport. He is also trying to streak past public images of himself: a maverick dilettante and a rebel for any cause. Proxmire may now be pulling away from the shadow of his own reputation.

He may hope to follow the path of glory traced by an earlier crusader against waste in defense spending—Harry S Truman of Missouri, who made his Senate reputation investigating the government's conduct of

World War II mobilization. Proxmire is armed with a Spartan personality oddly coupled with an enormous passion for publicity. "I know he works hard," says a sympathetic fellow senator, "but he likes to be rewarded. Ol' Prox loves that ink." Proxmire has indeed become a master navigator of the currents and doldrums of Washington publicity, conserving his more lurid revelations for Monday A.M.'s, weekends, national holidays, and other periods of lacunae in news from the Capitol.

Out of the leper colony

Although he now stands twenty-sixth in seniority among the one hundred senators, Proxmire still scrambles as though he barely had a toe-hold in the place, as though he were still in that half-ostracized status he held a decade ago. (Once, when he and fellow maverick ex-Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon squabbled over an appropriations bill, Senator Eugene J. McCarthy described the quarrel as "trouble in the leper colony.") Time and work have been the cure for Proxmire, in the Senate if not throughout Washington. A House Democrat and a member of the Joint Economic Committee, of which Proxmire is vice chairman, concedes that "he knows his stuff, and I agree with him on many economic policies. But the Joint Economic Committee used to be widely respected as a bipartisan forum, and I resent the perversion of this committee into a personal vehicle for one of the cheapest demagogues in the United States. The Joint Economic Committee is no place to pursue defense contractors, even if his goals are noble, which I doubt, since

I've never seen the public interest interfere with the direct personal interest of Bill Proxmire." Defense contractors and their allies in the Pentagon also complain bitterly—but privately and vaguely—that Proxmire's efforts are "weakening the military." But Proxmire responds with both puritanical self-confidence and publicity-conscious naïveté that reducing the military budget would not only save taxes and fight inflation but "could mean a stronger, leaner, and tougher military establishment."

In pursuing that object, Proxmire has introduced the phrase "cost overrun" into the national lexicon, embarrassed whole battalions of generals and admirals, enraged the gentlemen of General Electric, Litton Industries, Lockheed, and other defense tycoons, embittered some of his colleagues in Congress, and earned the new and grudging respect of others. Proxmire's hero, former Senator Paul H. Douglas of Illinois, once said, "A liberal need not be a wastrel." Proxmire is out to document the case and in the process may shift liberal orthodoxy into a more conservative, cost-conscious direction.

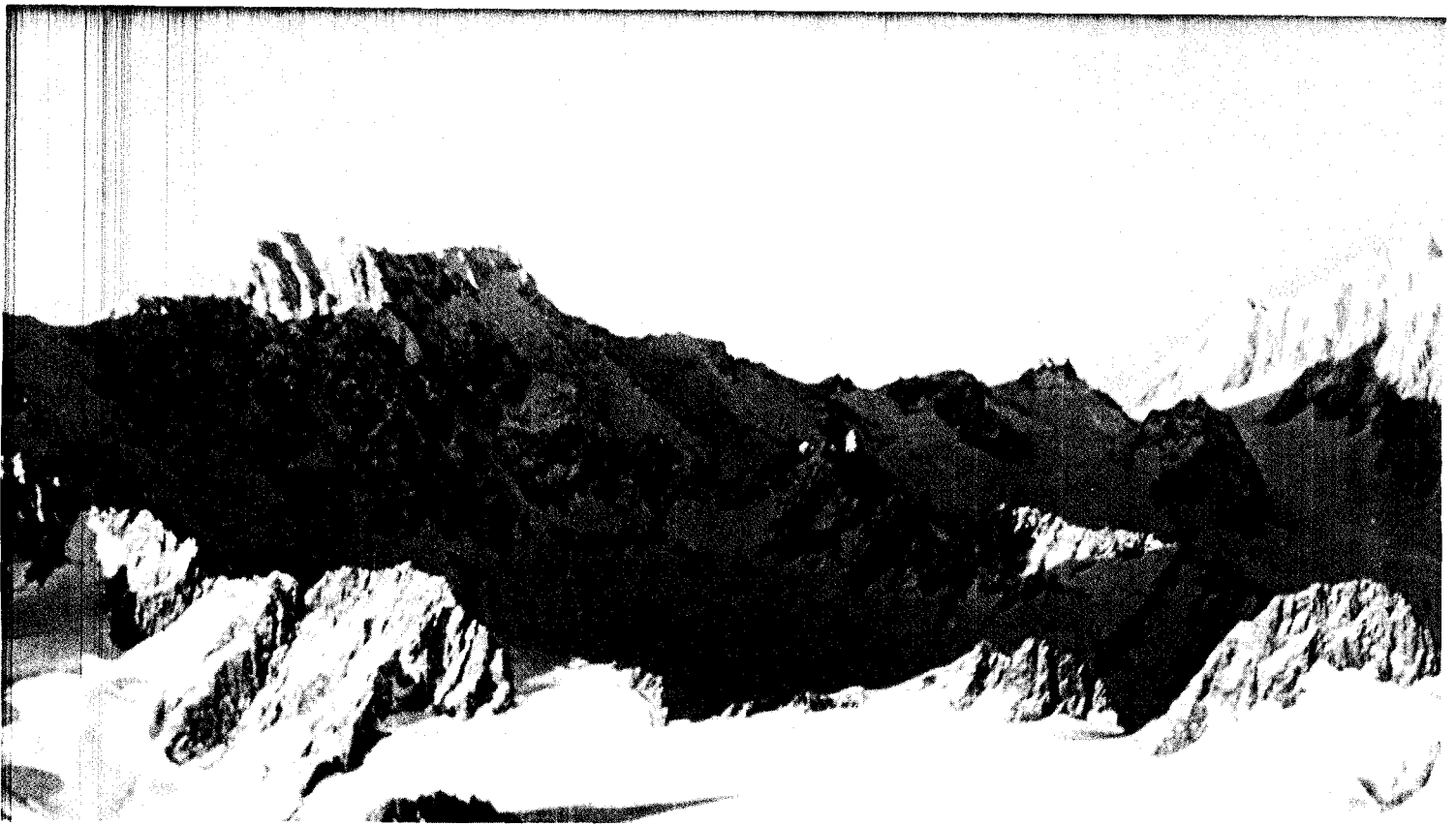
"Military spending is simply out of control," he says, "particularly in the procurement of weapons systems. It's our job in Congress to bring it under control." The cold-war climate of easy tolerance and patriotic awe of Pentagon programs has indeed bred a bizarre, Catch-22 menagerie of missiles, planes, and other weapons named for Greek gods, planets, birds, Indian tribes, arresting acronyms, and impressively enumerated signatures. But the names are less imposing than the final cost of the weapons or the speed with which their obsolescence

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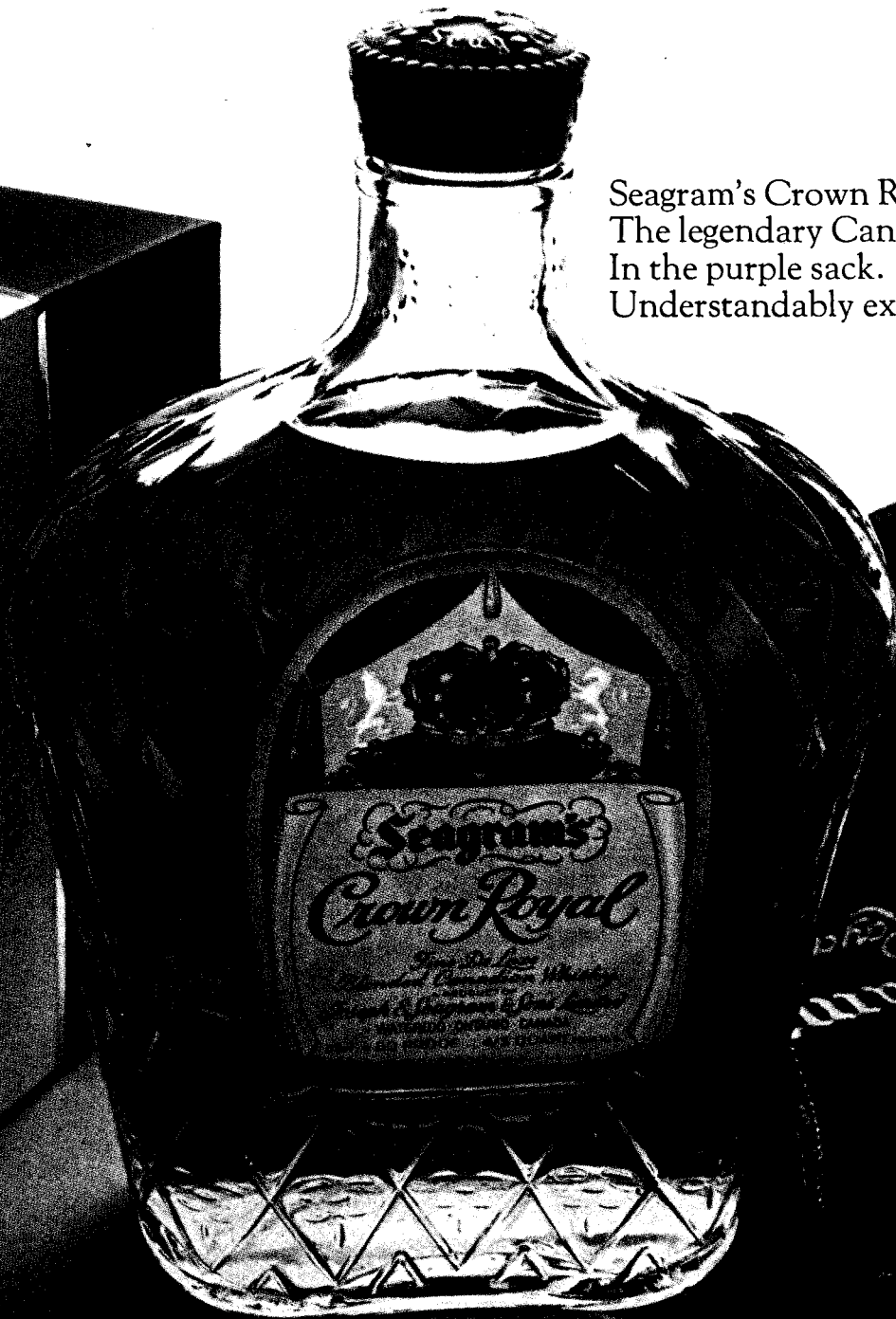


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WASHINGTON

surpasses their effectiveness. By Proxmire's own count, the subcommittee of the Joint Economic Committee, which he chairs, has uncovered cost increases on thirty-eight weapons systems totaling almost \$21 billion more than original cost estimates. One must be a jogging fan to sprint through the entire arsenal of folly uncovered by Proxmire, but to give some idea:

The Gama Goat is an ungainly looking army vehicle designed as a superjeep to traverse rough terrain and water. "It was originally estimated to cost \$69.1 million," says Proxmire. "It is now estimated to cost \$439 million. In addition, it is now a 7.5 ton truck instead of a jeep-sized vehicle, yet its cargo-carrying capability remains the same." His eyes widen and his voice rises, then drops in resignation as he adds, "Deliveries of the Gama Goat are also three years late, so far."

The Cheyenne helicopter, bristling with armament and a new type of rotor blade, cost \$204 million, considerably more than its estimated cost of \$126 million. The craft turned out to be too heavy to fly and became one of those rare birds, a weapons system grounded by the Defense Department itself. But months after its production contract with the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation was canceled, according to Proxmire, "the Army has spent approximately \$15 million on it. The money was paid to Lockheed for further research and development."

By such mastery of harum-scarum statistics, Proxmire has won the attention of colleagues in Congress and weakened the Pentagon's hold on the nation's Treasury, imagination, and spirit. Planes that don't fly, submarines that sink, rifles one must be a mechanic to operate, tanks that require a platoon of support troops—all were accepted as routine until the confluence of several antimilitarist trends created a demand for a champion of frugality in military spending. For all the talk of "cost effectiveness," Robert McNamara did not achieve fool-proof methods of weapons procurement. The war in Indochina drastically reduced public faith in the omnipotence and omniscience of the American military. The Nixon Administration, in office only briefly and struggling with the problem of grace-

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WASHINGTON

ful extraction from Vietnam, decided to push forward with the procurement of an antiballistic-missile system, provoking a four-month debate in the Senate that ended in a one-vote victory for the missile and the Administration. For the Pentagon the triumph was indeed Pyrrhic, for the ABM vote marked the end of privileges provided the military by Congress during the 1960s: a blank checkbook and a free hand.

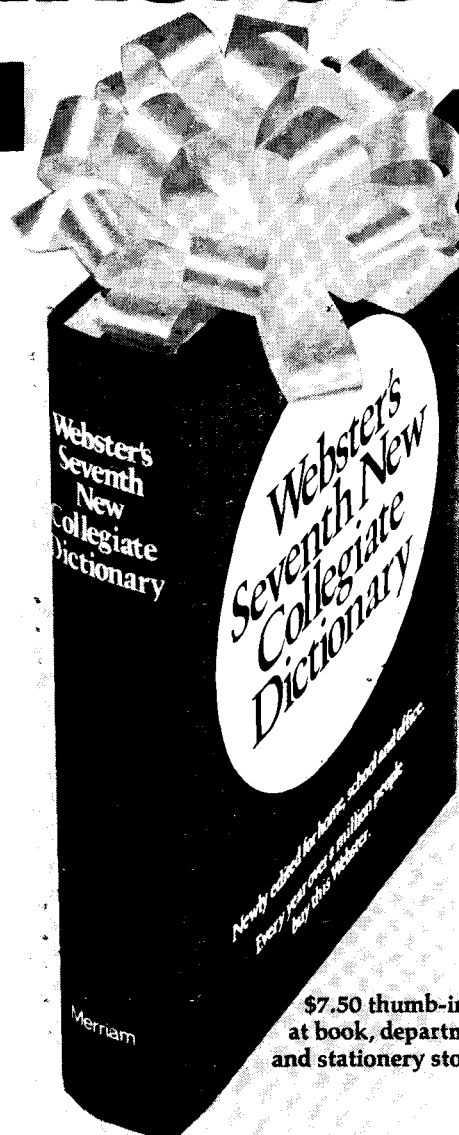
Senate opponents of the ABM credit part of their strength to Proxmire's histrionic hearings on weapons systems, particularly that of the C-5A Galaxy, a giant air cargo plane manufactured by Lockheed. Proxmire had begun the hearings of his subcommittee as a Diogenes, wandering in the wastes of the Pentagon searching for an honest man. He found A. Ernest Fitzgerald, Deputy for Management Systems, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force. Fitzgerald told Proxmire's subcommittee that cost overruns on the C-5A amounted to almost \$2 billion. Even in the high-volume Air Force trade, the figure seemed remarkable and drew attention to arguments against new weapons systems.

Honey and gall

Proxmire's frequent glib litany of dazzling statistics suggest to some of his fellow senators that he is a mechanical man. There is evidence of automatic response in the marvel of engineering that is Proxmire's constant campaigning for re-election. He subscribes in spades to the late Estes Kefauver's theory that you can't beat a politician who shakes more than five hundred hands a day. Nearly every weekend he has trekked back to Wisconsin for handshaking tours at county fairs, city sidewalks, and football games. During noncampaign years early in a term of office, a time when the average senator feels politically immortal, Proxmire spends forty-eight of fifty-two weekends back home. According to John W. Krole of the *Milwaukee Journal*, Proxmire has shaken hands in Wisconsin more than 2.5 million times since 1957.

Much of Proxmire's maverick reputation also has a programmed quality. Proxmire succeeded the late Sena-

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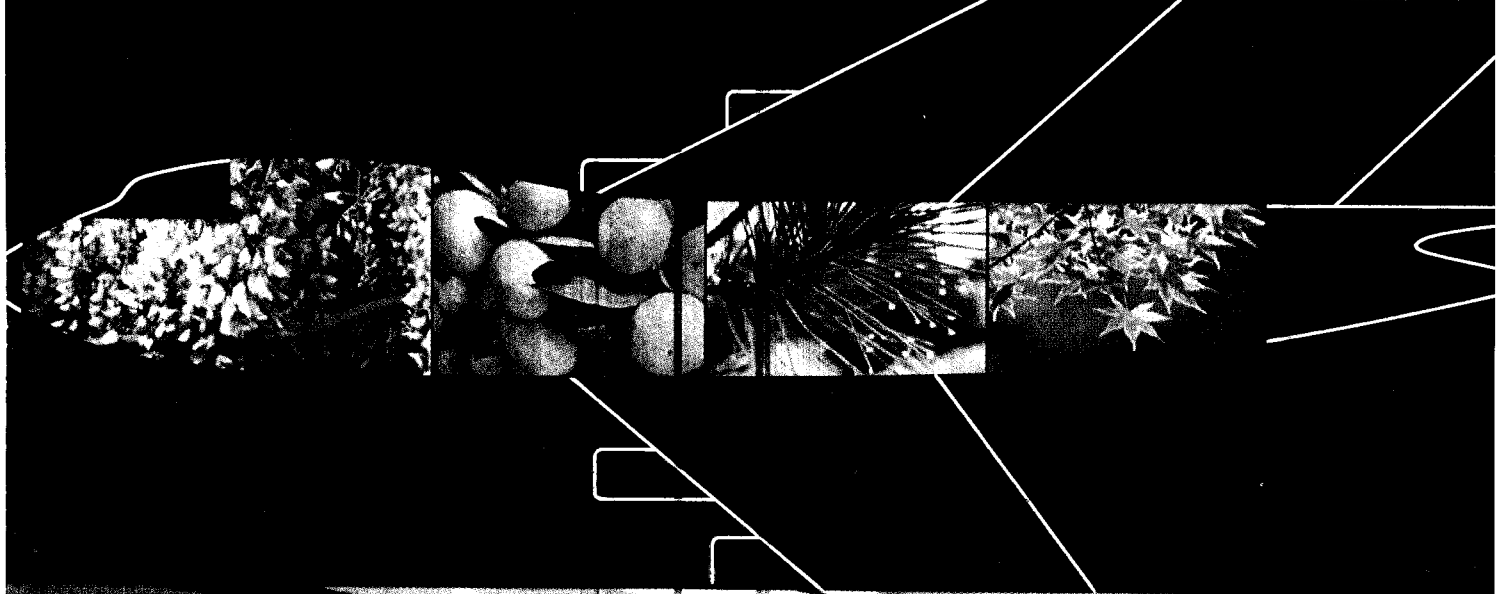
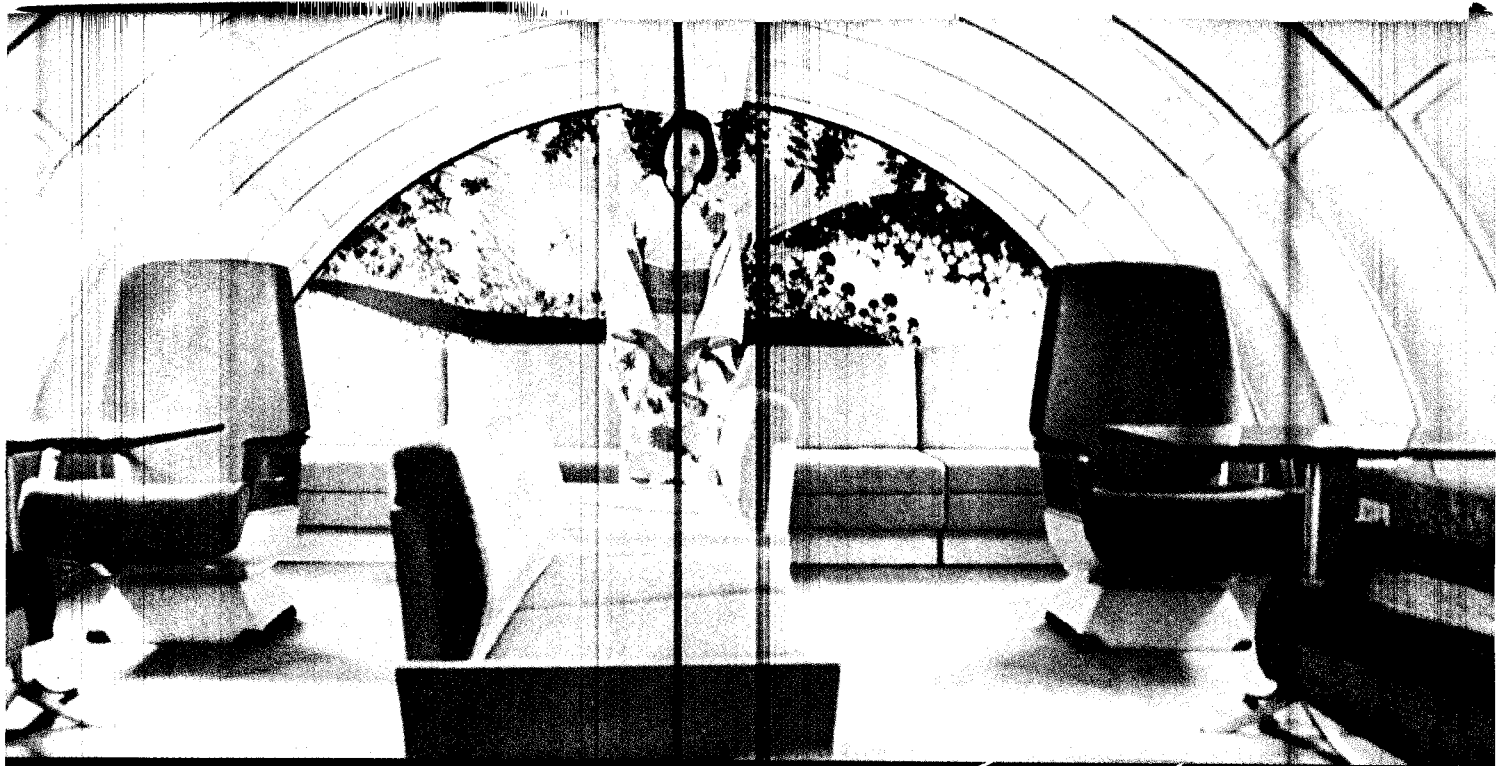
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WASHINGTON

tor Joseph R. McCarthy, who had followed Senator Robert La Follette. Wisconsin seems to demand independent, if not mercurial, views in a senator, and Proxmire has been more than obliging. Since he criticized Presidents Kennedy and Johnson when they were in the White House, it is not surprising to see Proxmire abandon his Democratic cohorts to defend President Nixon. Early in June this year, at the height of criticism of the President for the invasion of Cambodia, Proxmire told a commencement audience at Milton College in Wisconsin that "the President has been personally attacked. His motives and character have been assaulted cruelly and unfairly. In my view, Mr. Nixon made a tragic mistake in Cambodia. He was wrong. But the President is a decent and intelligent man. He is doing his honest best to end the Vietnam war as swiftly as he can."

Proxmire has all but patented his potion of honey and gall in lubricating his way to acceptability in the Senate. His book *Report from Wasteland: America's Military-Industrial Complex* (Praeger) has more heroes than villains: "The abilities of Senators Richard B. Russell of Georgia and John Stennis of Mississippi are unsurpassed in the Senate. Men like Stuart Symington of Missouri and Henry M. Jackson of Washington and the Senate's gentle lady, Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, have unequaled reputations among their colleagues for intelligence, industry and patriotism." George Mahon of Texas, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, is described as "a quiet, conservative, conscientious and hard-working member of Congress. Like John Stennis in the Senate, he is one of dozens of congressmen who receive little publicity but serve the country well."

In choosing his enemies, Proxmire selects sitting ducks. The moguls of Lockheed, Boeing, and North American Rockwell are not beloved figures, any more than are the faceless bureaucrats and brass hats in the Pentagon. They are the trolls and dragons of *Wasteland*: "The disgraceful fact is that neither the contractors nor the Pentagon tells the truth about the cost of the weapons. They deliberately lie about the cost. They deceive Con-

gress. They deceive the public. They purposely underestimate the cost of these weapons systems in order to get them established and to get Congress and the country committed to them." They need, however, at least one Capitol Hill accomplice, and Proxmire provides him in Lucius Mendel Rivers (Democrat, South Carolina), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, who does not share the Senate's "sophisticated and at times critical attitude towards local pressures and Pentagon requests." Rivers' disdain for Proxmire is reciprocal but mostly unprintable.

Getting a reputation

Proxmire's first brawl in Washington branded him as a carefree Quixote and gave him a reputation that almost ended his career. His experience illustrates how reputations are made in Washington, and it helps explain Proxmire's windmill tendencies as well. August 27, 1957, was Lyndon B. Johnson's forty-ninth birthday. On that night—Proxmire's first election—he was called by his Majority Leader and told him, "Senator Johnson, I'm the best birthday present you ever had." For a while, it was true. Proxmire was the fiftieth Democrat among ninety-six senators and strengthened Johnson and the Democrats in the Senate. The new senator was welcomed as a sign of the Texan's bond with Northern liberals and rewarded with important committee assignments from the man who was at the height of his reputation as a parliamentary wizard. Washington was a dull political town in those late Eisenhower days, and for many journalistic admirers, Johnson filled the vacuum with his high-powered leadership of the Senate and his enshrinement of his friend Sam Rayburn's motto, "If you want to get along, go along." Johnson's severest critics, Senators Paul Douglas of Illinois and Joseph Clark of Pennsylvania, were dismissed as lightweights. After a brief coma under the spell of the Johnson "treatment," Proxmire emerged early in 1959 with an attack on the Senate floor against Johnson's "one-man rule" of the Democrats. His boldness encouraged several of the fifteen new Democrats who had been elected in 1958, and the revolt against LBJ's leadership hampered his 1960 campaign for the presidency. (Prox-

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WASHINGTON

mire became a close friend of Senators Douglas and Clark; his son is named Douglas Clark Proxmire.)

A subsequent poll taken by *Pageant* magazine among Washington reporters listed the rebel among "the five least effective senators." The poll almost retired him. His opponent for re-election in 1964, Wilbur Renk, ran with the issue, arguing that Proxmire, for all his energy, was accomplishing little in Washington. Although Proxmire won by 112,000 votes, many in Wisconsin believe that he escaped defeat only on Lyndon Johnson's coat-tails, as LBJ beat Barry Goldwater in Wisconsin by 300,000 votes. In 1970, Proxmire's seat did not figure in the Nixon Administration's plan to capture the Senate. As one of the President's political handymen explained: "It wasn't worth the money or effort to try and beat him. And, hell, he's a damned attractive fellow to the people in Wisconsin."

The 1964 campaign sobered Proxmire and made him think about cohabiting with the specialized processes of the Senate committee system. He resolved to be "more pragmatic" and was, defending LBJ's conduct of the war in Vietnam long after his Democratic cohort from Wisconsin, Gaylord Nelson, became an active Senate dove. Early in his career he was plagued by one of the highest staff turnover rates in the Senate because, former staff members assert, he was aloof and independent, failing to confide in assistants and speech writers. Now his staff of eighteen has reasonably stable tenure, and Proxmire says, "They make me look good. I'm really dependent on them for a great deal of research and original ideas." His administrative assistant, Howard Shuman, did the same job for Douglas before the latter's defeat in 1966 and says, "Both Douglas and Proxmire are such hardworking people that they make their staffs look good."

The departure of Lyndon Johnson from the Senate also reduced Proxmire's urge to be contrary. Majority Leader Mike Mansfield has, in effect, closed the Senate "club" and been less arbitrary in committee and floor assignments. Proxmire's earlier reputation as a loner had its saving graces. Between 1964 and 1968, the Demo-

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cratic Party was polarized into Kennedy and Johnson factions. Proxmire could not be considered a reliable member of either. During that time, he used his new-won trust and expertise to help realize a long-time dream of Douglas', a "truth-in-lending" law ordering retailers and other lenders to detail to borrowers the specific costs of credit.

In the Senate today, Proxmire receives surprisingly widespread respect—surprising because many of the senators themselves are surprised. "I thought he was just another wild-eyed, simpleminded spender who resented the Pentagon because of its money," says one Republican. "But, Lord, he's done his homework, and he helps us understand these weapons." A Democrat who's known him a long time says, "He started moving slowly with that waste-in-the-Pentagon stuff. But events are catching up with him. It's the same thing with the economy and housing. The things he's been warning about are now talked of in crisis proportions. It shows you that

even on a two-stringed instrument, you're bound to make some music." Bipartisan encomiums from liberals and conservatives prove that Proxmire has gained esteem in Washington, if not affection. He made the choice early to be respected rather than loved; in the Senate he is thoroughly pleasant, but does not engage in hail-fellow camaraderie. He shuns the capital's social life.

Going somewhere?

Proxmire draws his Puritan work ethic from a German-Irish heritage and a comfortable Middle West background. His father, Dr. Theodore Proxmire, was a general practitioner in Lake Forest, Illinois, who "believed in working fourteen hours a day, seven days a week," his son recalls. Young Proxmire went East to prep school, Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, where he was voted "biggest grind" and "best dancer." At Yale, he was welterweight boxing champion, then went to Harvard Business School and became a trainee in the J. P. Morgan Company—hardly typical training for a future firebrand.

World War II liberalized Proxmire and changed his mind about a business career. He served in the CIC—Counterintelligence Corps, or as he and his comrades-in-arms called it, "Christ, I'm confused." This branch of the Army, supposedly its most efficient and self-critical, imbued him with strong feelings about the American military's fallibility. It was a view of the innards of military bureaucracy denied to Mendel Rivers, John Stennis, and other nonveterans. Determined to pursue politics, Proxmire returned to Harvard for a degree in public administration, then chose a place to live almost solely on the basis of political opportunities offered newcomers. Wisconsin seemed open-minded and desperate for Democrats. Proxmire took a \$40-a-week job as investigative reporter on the Madison *Capital-Times* and enjoyed exploiting a since-repealed state law allowing the publication of individual state income tax returns. After an argument with his bosses on the subject, Proxmire was fired, then ran for and won a seat in the State Assembly in 1950. Democrats were so outnumbered and hard-up that the gubernatorial nomination of 1952 went to the Ivy

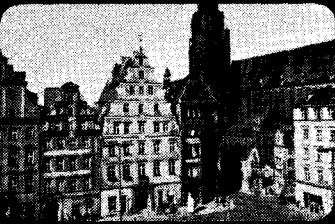
League newcomer. He was drubbed by Governor Walter Kohler in 1952 and lost again in 1954. On his third try for governor, he ran into the Eisenhower landslide, and by the end of 1956 Proxmire's political hopes were clouded in defeat. He had gone through a divorce—"a political casualty," he calls it—had remarried, and planned to go into the printing business. Joseph McCarthy's death meant a special election in 1957. Proxmire, the best-known name in the party, won the Democratic primary, then defeated Kohler for the Senate by 123,000 votes.

Within the Democratic Party today, Proxmire stands on the ground occupied by Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine in 1966. Proxmire has diligently established credentials in the complex but nonideological field of defense spending as Muskie did with the environment issue. Muskie impressed fellow politicians with detailed inquiries into relatively arcane fields like intergovernmental relations; Proxmire has done the same with his Joint Economic Committee expositions on the functioning of the Federal Reserve Board. Muskie's goals were minor, but probably realistic ones for achieving a slowdown on pollution. Proxmire's sights are aimed realistically low too: he wants an annual "posture statement" from the Secretary of State as well as the Secretary of Defense against which to measure Pentagon budget requests; and the installation of "zero-base" budgeting, forcing bureaucrats to justify the year-to-year existence of a program instead of explaining only its annual increment.

If, as they did in 1968, the Democrats decide to choose their vice presidential nominee largely on merit, Proxmire's name may be high on the roster. If not, he can look forward to a fruitful career in the Senate, where he is second-ranking man on the Banking and Currency Committee, due to be chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, and is one of the younger members of the Appropriations Committee. In the parlance of politicians, he is not visibly "moving around" like, say, Birch Bayh or Harold Hughes, in search of the vice presidency or what lies beyond. But until he slows down, there is reason to suspect that William Proxmire is going somewhere.

—MARTIN NOLAN

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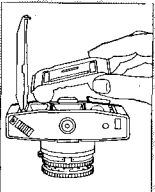
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Innocent Bystander

by L.E. Sissman

A DAY IN THE CITY, 1970

Up at ten after long night's talk with New Canaan host and hostess. Cutting up old touches (con man's argot, that). Shower. Shave. Dress. November morn. Rime of frost on still-green grass outside. Eat big breakfast fixed by host. Smoke, talk. Who's for New York? Everybody.

Pile into host's huge Plymouth station wagon. Down thumping slabs of Merritt Parkway. Trees in median almost full-grown. Saplings when I was a kid. Road seemed wider then. Down twisting Hutchinson River Parkway, another wonder of the 30s. Lanes hardly one car wide. Still lots of trees in Westchester. Down Thruway to Major Deegan. Crags topped with fantastical high rises, housing projects, pillared institutions. Tangle of Harlem River ramps and bridges at Throgs Neck. Arcs and diagonals of ramps like GM World of Tomorrow at World's Fair, 1939. South Bronx buildings, all brick, tumble down to river's edge. Dale Oldsmobile, Stadium Motel. Down East River Drive. Dynasties of Queens on left, gutted cars in dead-end streets on right. Hospital complex. Low-income housing. Playgrounds; kids with footballs. Windowless shells of tenements in East Hundreds followed by luxury-apartment towers clinging to eastern cliffs of island. Turn off Drive in Fifties.

Across town: double-parkers, women walking poodles, town houses with miraculous cream fronts, boys on delivery trikes, many tiny ethnic restaurants. New buildings still going up in spite of slump; who rents all those square feet of space?

Up Madison. More old buildings here. Fewer stone facings, more brick fronts. Adland upstairs, ads' grist downstairs: clothes, cutlery, cameras,

luggage, pipes, lamps, chinaware, boutique, boutique, boutique. Approaching Whitney. Spot parking place on side street. Park. Air outside is raw, dank, smoggy. Wind with a winter knife. Chatter of wives' heels on sidewalk. Past Gristede's, bar, boutique, boutique. Into ugly front of Whitney. Pay; ride cattle-car elevator, huge and barn-smelling, to Eakins retrospective. Fellow passengers young, old, bearded, eccentrically dressed, armored in art lore. Lore of the jungle. Eyes—suspicious, appraising—throw curves at fellow passengers. Everybody out for Eakins.

Tall, cool, dark galleries not crowded; show nearing end. Paintings in roughly chronological sequence. Apprentice sketches: powerful, almost allegorical *Nude Woman Seated, Wearing a Mask*, like some negative figure of Justice. Early sporting paintings: scullers in crosslight of sunset. First great portraits. Masterpiece of his thirties, *The Gross Clinic*. Surgeons in frock coats operate in amphitheater; patient's wife cringes, tiers of students watch, godlike figure of Dr. Gross, bloody scalpel in bloody hand, looms over all. Museum-goers study painting respectfully, impassively, at distance. Two tiny Oriental children get in close, examine it minutely, marveling at blood.

More portraits. Worn, downcast, handsome face of *Mrs. John H. Brinton. Portrait of a Lady with a Setter Dog*: Mrs. Thomas Eakins, slight, beautiful, and pained. *The Agnew Clinic*, masterpiece of his forties. Surgeons in white gowns now (1889), still no rubber gloves; Dr. Agnew benignly presiding over mastectomy. More portraits, honest,

PHOTO AND DRAWING CREDITS

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right, Bill Troyer.

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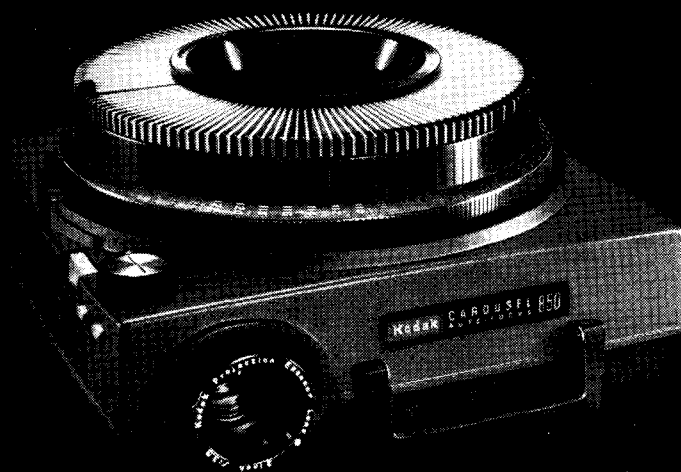
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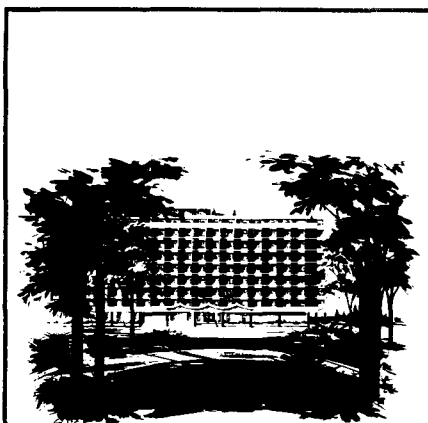
BYSTANDER

blunt, unsettling. *William H. Macdowell*, artist's father-in-law. *Mrs. Samuel Murray*, cool and plain. *Mrs. Thomas Eakins*, older, more heroically aware of death. The subjects, poised in the pain and assurance of their Victorian stations, look out at the viewers, mobile, frivolous, anxious, self-concerned, the nineteenth century judging the twentieth.

The last portrait: *Dr. Edward Anthony Spitzka*, 1913. Terrifying. Eyes dark blanks. Cheeks raw gouges. Unfinished, the art historians say, because of Eakins' failing eyesight and waning health. But almost the beginning of a new style, a new statement of life and its consequences.

"Tourists! Peasants!"

Down in the elevator. Lunch in the Museum cafeteria. Decent and cheap, especially for New York. A tour of a prefab contemporary house set up in the courtyard. Junk-art furniture. Junk-art art. Cramped Pullman kitchen. Dark, small-windowed bed-



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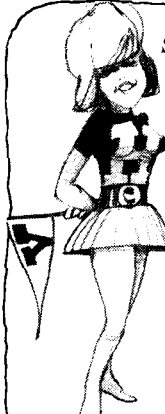
room. Sterile white walls. Insult to human dignity.

Into the car; back to East River Drive via 42nd Street. Past the UN, its timeless monolith already dating badly. Past Stuyvesant Town, now middle-aged and sooty. Under the bridges, recoiling from the mass of wrecked cars at the base of the Manhattan, nodding with the pleasure of unchange in the sunlight on the cables of the Brooklyn. Past Park Row, its newspapers long gone, its buildings still the same. Down under Battery Park, up on the West Side Highway, confronted by the absurdly high twin red-and-silver towers of the World Trade Center, still being built. No spires, no masts, no setbacks: only the almost infinite tapering up of parallel lines, ugly, unnerving, and repeated for overemphasis.

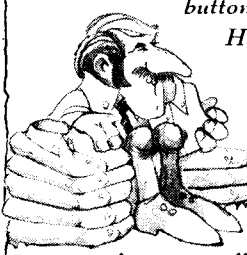
We dive into the financial district. Streets of unremembered narrowness; buildings with granite flanks of unremembered size. On Cortlandt Street, a drunken red-haired mulatto woman in a green top and tangerine bell-bottoms tacks up the sidewalk, accosts a black man on the corner of Broadway, who turns her down. Streets otherwise empty; Saturday afternoon. Trinity aloof and deserted. No soul on Wall Street the day after a twenty-one-million-share trading day. No one on Pine Street. No one in Fraunces Tavern. Peace.

Up the West Side again, by the scattered ruin of Washington Market, and into the Village. Dense crowds here: the Village of the forties and fifties exploding in quantity, not in kind. More of the same: more chair stores, door stores, junk shops, antique shops, food shops, jewelry stores, clothing stores, off-off theaters, restaurants, bars. More artists, writers, painters, students, hangers-on, neat pretty girls, sloppy pretty girls. More cars. More motorbikes. More trucks. More cop cars. On Sixth below Eighth Street, a solid block of sidewalk hawkers selling leather goods, bomb-shaped candles, hashish pipes, art jewelry, head goods. Most hawkers young, male, skinny, bearded, hill-billy-hatted, in blue jeans. Most customers the same.

We park and walk through Washington Square. Old Village hand—horn-rims, pipe in belt, space shoes—picks us up, points out sights, recommends restaurants. We tell him we're going to Lüchow's. "Tourists! Peas-

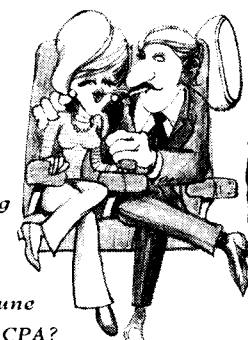


*She goes to Harvard.
She made Phi
Beta Kappa.
She's all knowledge
with FACTS-
IN-FIVE.*
How can she tell
her father she's
transferring
to Vassar?*



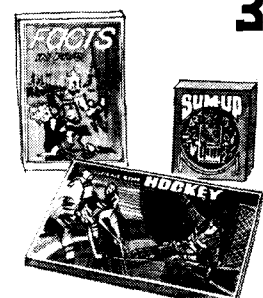
*He digs white
button-down shirts.
He tells knock-
knock jokes.
He always
loses at
BLUE LINE
HOCKEY.*
Can a man
his age still learn how to
figure skate?*

*She vacations
with the
Jet-Set.
She craves
diet colas.
She spends
her spare
hours playing
SUM-UP.*
Should she
join a commune
or become a CPA?*



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ants!" he says, inoffensively, and loses self in crowd. Lüchow's. Glad to see us. No reservation needed. Seated at once in front room. Room half empty, but still early. String band in back room plays waltzes, alternates with German brass band. Reminds me of uniformed German bands tramping through slums, playing for pennies during Depression, when I was a kid. We drink, watch diners drifting in. Odd mixture: few tourists, many aspiring young couples in far-out clothes but far from with it, many middle-aged, middle-class foursomes running to fat and running to mod. Next to us, four older businessmen—needle trades? retailers?—settling down to serious drinking, talk, heavy eating. We order fairly elaborate meals at quite moderate prices. The food comes; it's good and we're hungry. We eat too much, then eat too-rich desserts.

Out on the sidewalk. Academy of Music, where I used to watch real vaudeville twenty years ago. Klein's. On the Square. The Square itself, an American Hyde Park packed with dissident speakers till a few years ago. Now quiet, except for the cars. Not many passersby. Chill air laced with smog. I cough.

Into the car again; up Fourth Avenue, retitled Park Avenue South but no more gracious for that. Around Gramercy Park, not a hair changed in three decades and quiet as the graves of its old architects. Uptown to Grand Central, a frieze of ill-assorted flashing and unwinking lights. Across 42nd Street again and up the Drive. United Nations Plaza wheels away, followed by Sutton Place and Gracie Mansion, embowered in leafless trees. East Harlem follows. At the northeast tip of the island, I look back. A million lights reflecting green on the low cloud. All of the towers we once looked up to now oppressing us. I face front again, looking backward less and less these days, looking forward to a nightcap in the transient camp of Fairfield County. It's been a long day in the city.

REPORTS & COMMENT CONTRIBUTORS

Martin Nolan is Washington bureau chief of the Boston *Globe*. L. E. Sissman's most recent book of poetry is *Scattered Returns*.

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Science Under Fire

SIR: *Re:* Donald Fleming's "Big Science Under Fire" in the September issue, you will pardon me if I'm tired of reactionary articles protesting long overdue questioning of sacred "institutions." You will also pardon me if I resent yet another smear of my age, for Mr. Fleming managed to imply several times that we young people (hippies all) are responsible for maligning Science, that poor old dowager who never meant no harm.

In point of fact, we do protest *manipulative* science, which is forever finding ways to supplant natural process, implement utterly wasteful technology, and despoil all in the name of the "funded" buck. If we realize how "Pure" pure science is, Mr. Fleming fails to realize that our anger is primarily aimed at business science, represented by DuPont, GE, or Lockheed. Billions of dollars for a senseless ABM system, more billions for an insane SST, when the woods are burning, *burning*, sirs. Fleming mentions not one of these gigantic science-technology boondoggles. It would be funny if we weren't up against our planet's death between thirty and fifty years from now. But let's not criticize, says Fleming, for if we hold back developments on electric toothbrushes, or wonderfully destructive weapons systems, we will also retard science from getting around to saving our world, priorities being what they are. Good lord, are we to lie still even then as they dig our graves?

The article is so full of willful ignorance that one hardly knows where to begin specific criticism. But where is the sense when Fleming writes, "If the Establishment means anything, it means big government and big business, and between them

they pay most of the bills for big science," and follows it with, "By a natural train of associations, science is . . . suspect as a pliant tool of the Establishment. The argument is crude and full of holes, but fervently embraced by young people, including scientists"? If it *is* crude and full of holes, demonstrate it, give us something beside your assurance of our stupidity. Or are we incapable of understanding? Fleming says most of us are "incompetent to pursue scientific careers anyhow." One searches for the well-praised objectivity: Where is Fleming's statistical evidence of our incompetence?

JOHN MADSEN
Boulder, Colo.

SIR: Donald Fleming's "Big Science Under Fire" begs the question and rarely touches on the real issues behind Big Science, and defends it in isolation of the larger context. Fleming completely ignores the ramifications of Big Science as an actual part of the *technocracy*, which Theodore Roszak defines in *Making of a Counter Culture* as "that society in which those who govern justify themselves by appeal to scientific forms of knowledge. And beyond the authority of science, there is no appeal." This phenomenon occurs today by *selective* research grants and *partisan* "think-tank" doles. Oddly enough, Fleming himself warns against this very thing in respect to the military, as does Roszak.

Fleming also ignores the Appendix of *Counter Culture*, in which Roszak effectively counters the concept of "balance" (i.e., the weighing of the "good" effects of scientific discovery against the "evil," which Fleming accepts unconditionally); for example: "The demand for a balanced view of science and technology

amounts, then, to something rather like a con game . . . we need only to examine the activities and sentiments of those whose capacity for experience has already been raped by the ethos of objectivity."

Then, it appears that Fleming has missed the main points of contention (the technocracy, "balance," etc.), and his isolated argument leads to a lack of humanitarian ethics as pointed out by Roszak, and also Erich Fromm in *Revolution of Hope*.

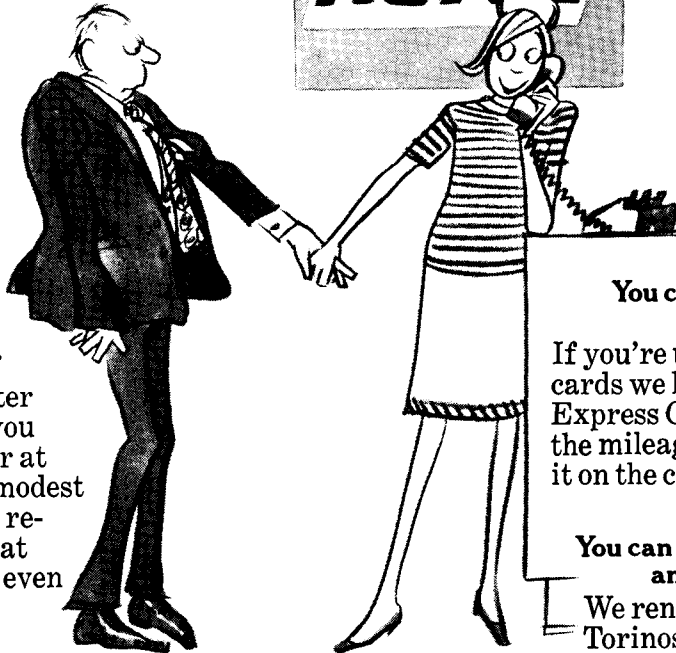
However, Fleming once touches on real possibilities of controlling, by his own admission, the undesirable effects of exclusive Department of Defense involvement in scientific research: military research should *not* be divorced from civilian research. Also (and here is where Fleming seems really out of touch with constructive trends in the Youth Movement), the "enthusiasm of the young" *has* been fired and leveled at building a "new science in a new society." And ironically, this is the point of Roszak's book which Fleming disputes, to put science to work on a human scale, or, in his phrase, "to get the world back into the condition it was in before they [the scientists and/or the technocrats?] shook it up out of all recognition."

(But again, Fleming is dogmatic, in the face of this statement, in insisting that "to preserve or restore the natural environment . . . all the manipulative powers of science will be required.")

Therefore, I find it amazing that Fleming would defend the innocuous in isolation from culture. No one, or thing, he cites opposes pure scientific research *per se*, but all, with him, strongly oppose its totalitarian control.

BILL DICKS
Minneapolis, Minn.

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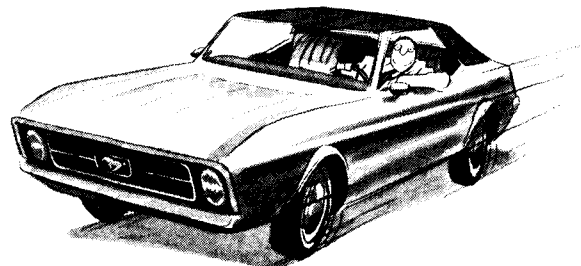
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SIR: Donald Fleming asserts that the dissension of young idealists regarding science has to do with resentment toward the principle of authority. A case might be made for such an assertion, but Fleming does not make it. In fact, the illustrations he employs (cyclamates, DDT, the Pill) would better be used to make just the contrary assertion: that young idealists oppose "science" because it has not been scientific (that is, authoritative) enough. The opposition by young people to cyclamates, for example, is not so much that they are risky and have been produced, as that the "scientific" community (in this case, embodied in the FDA) chose to play politics with the drug, at the expense of scientific authority. The dissent is not so much over science, or even over cyclamates, as over the willful distorting and ignoring of available scientific fact. Unfortunately, such playing with scientific fact has happened often enough recently to make virtually all science suspect. The science which is "anathema to young people" is not science at all, but politics posing as science. When some people (especially the young) buy science, they want to be sure they are getting the real thing.

DENNIS MAACK
Big Springs, Kan.

Easy Rider

SIR: In regard to Diana Trilling's moralizing remarks on the sneaky tactics of *Easy Rider* ("*Easy Rider* and Its Critics," September *Atlantic*):

Mrs. Trilling overlooks the point of the picture when she quotes Vincent Canby's remark: "After all, Wyatt and Billy, the heroin pushers, may be the same kind of casual murderers as the southern red necks." The film certainly does support the interpretation that Wyatt's comment, "We blew it," indicates his realization of the failure of their "spiritual intention"—Wyatt for one beginning to comprehend that they are not such cool, hip, pure dudes as they had once envisioned themselves. Surely not everybody was misled by the supposedly opposing, near parodies of both right and left as presented in the film? These two men, as the blurb on the ads put it, went out to find America, all right, and found themselves right in it and of it. In their own lost, unthinking, ethnocentric immorality, they are little different

from the "southern red necks" who kill them. Perhaps it is in this culminating self-confrontation that they die (this viewpoint, by the way, does not necessarily lead one to the conclusion that *Easy Rider* therefore "would have to be accused of having vested its moral authority in cold-blooded murderers." I think the deaths may be a little more subtly symbolic than that).

So Mrs. Trilling perhaps is anxiously projecting when she declares that *Easy Rider* simplistically "divides the world into the good and the bad guys." She speaks longingly of "a culture in which there were wise men, teachers, whose job it was to guide us through the few possible areas of doubt." Well, she certainly skirts away from anything that might be seen as other than blatantly "right" or "wrong" in her comments on this film—but the world itself just doesn't always work that way. *Easy Rider* employs a "deviousness," certainly, but not for the purposes of glossy, immoral propaganda that she suspects it does.

That's all right, though—I am really amazed at the number of critics who have missed the point of the film. The tendency seems to be either to think it is a swell movie about a couple of neat guys, or to do as Mrs. Trilling has done, condemn it as a misleading movie presenting a false picture of what neat guys are. Neither interpretation is right. One of the two main figures in the making of the film (I can't recall whether it was Fonda or Hopper) said, sometime after the film was out, that Wyatt and Billy were not better than their red-neck compatriots—that everybody was wrong.

A few more points. First, Mrs. Trilling's statement that the use of landscape in the picture "proposes more than a kinship, actually an equivalence, or at least an interdependence, between the fulfillment which may be sought by moving beyond the frontiers of civilization and the gratifications which are sought in extending the frontiers of consciousness. . . ." Where did she pick that up? And her comment (wow!): "Symbols of what we are to suppose is the idealism and aspiration of this revolutionary day, Wyatt and Billy lack the energy to create anything, comment on anything, feel anything except the mute pleasures of each other's company." Maybe that's what



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she supposes is the "idealism and aspiration of this revolutionary day," but any movie-goer even reasonably informed about what revolutionaries are today in America would *not* suppose it so. I wonder what the Chicago Seven, among many, would think about her remark! And her line that "the film implies that spiritual freedom depends upon an escape from technology"—well, hmm, there were those gorgeous bikes, y'see. . . Those guys weren't away from technology (though the farmer may have been), anymore than they were as innocent as Mrs. Trilling claims the film pictured them.

So *perhaps* the role of the critics has a "moralizing function," but I should also hope that there would be prodding to thought and flexibility rather than to simplified damnation.

MARGUERITE BABCOCK
Pittsburgh, Penn.

SIR: To say that the film *Easy Rider* contains "grave deficiencies of moral and social intelligence" reflects a grave deficiency on the part of the author to see the forest through the trees. Mrs. Trilling seems so obsessed with the idea that there must be direct recrimination for the illegal heroin/cocaine transaction that she fails to see the larger moral statement. The film appears to minimize the drug scene because it is emphasizing the larger tragedy of a highly technologized society that drives its young (and not-so-young) away to attempt rediscovery of more basic, somewhat forgotten values represented by the farmer.

That Billy and Wyatt fail and are reduced to seeking escape from experiences such as they encounter in the restaurant is more an explanation of the drug scene than an excuse for it. The horrors of the LSD trip in the film, furthermore, reveal the risks involved in such a venture. That Mrs. Trilling could find much "joy" in the tears and agonized wailings of this scene indicates she may have been looking for justification of a preconceived notion.

SUSAN SCHREIBER
Palos Park, Ill.

SIR: Mrs. Trilling seemed, to me and others of my household, unnecessarily vehement in her deploring of *Easy Rider* and the critics thereof. To her, the film presented "lessons . . . an



Iced Creme

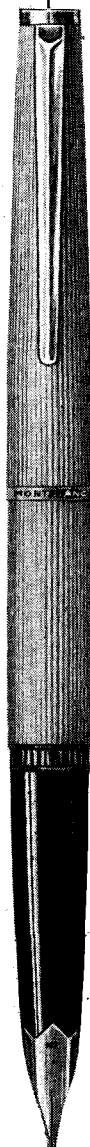
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enticing brew of the fashionable, the false, and the pernicious," which were being swallowed by both her deluded fellow critics and America's youth.

Really now. The things, scenes, and ideas presented in *Easy Rider* were certainly simplistic and condensed for aesthetic value, as Mrs. Trilling doubtfully and grudgingly suggests, but they are most certainly not false or even pernicious. Fashionable—not even that! I know that no one my age (twenty), except perhaps the most simpleminded, would be "enticed" or "seduced" by the hip ideology of *Easy Rider*, simply because this ideology is now a fact of life as it has been for about the last five years, bad or good.

I and my millions of fellow youth had no training films to teach us to be the way we (and the riders) are. The "hip" and dope scenes are well entrenched. The drugs used by Wyatt and Billy and the others are no cause for outcry, nor do I or my fellows think, as Mrs. Trilling seems to think we should; "that the sniffing of heroin and the taking of LSD are simply alternative to smoking pot." Neither do I think that this film was trying to proselytize converts to the "take dope and see real life" faith.

I believe Mrs. Trilling's attitude betrays a great fear of things "getting out of hand." This fear is unfounded as well as sadly out of date since things are already so out of hand in this country that no slyly quiet and politely vitriolic horror story will ever put them back again; nor is it likely that further *Easy Riders* will get things further out. You underestimate your film audience, and your fellow critics.

LUCY MOREY
Santa Rosa, Calif.

SIR: In making *Easy Rider* out to be a sort of morality play, Mrs. Trilling is perhaps accurately describing its effect on many of its viewers, but is this proper grounds for criticizing the film itself? In the *Easy Rider* I saw, Wyatt and Billy were not innocent symbols of lost American purity. For example, if the commune really represents "an entire goodness and harmony" as she says, why then is there so much conflict between it and the easy riders? And does Mrs. Trilling need D.H. Lawrence's explicitness to see that Wyatt and Billy did

indeed have sexual relations with the prostitutes? Perhaps the strongest evidence that her interpretation is too facile is the fact that my wife and I saw an entirely different ending from the one she did: they were not "overtaken"; the killer could have shot accidentally or in sudden anger at Billy's obscene gesture and killed Wyatt to cover the evidence. To my mind the killers were victims of an American violence possessed by almost everyone in the film, from the dope-peddling heroes and the rather clannish commune hippies to the "red necks," who are more obviously violent. Didn't she hear the song "Goddamn the Pusher"?

Mrs. Trilling wants modern critics to ask questions about the worth of the many moral codes being offered our society. To my mind, *Easy Rider* looked at drugs, communes, the open country, and found death. *Easy Rider*, see what you done done.

GEORGE ENTENMAN
Besancon, France

SIR: Diana Trilling did a beautiful job of exploding the moral pretensions of *Easy Rider*. The movie contained, though, a further level of absurdity; the boys' plan was a classically infantile one to set themselves up a Free Ride (we'll get the stuff; smuggle it, sell it, buy the best bikes in the world, and then Ride!). If there were no organized, fairly repressive society, there would be no smuggling, and no easy killing to be made from it. Life might be pastoral, but it would be no *Easy Ride*. It would be what life in an unorganized world always was: unremitting toil, poverty, and recurrent plagues.

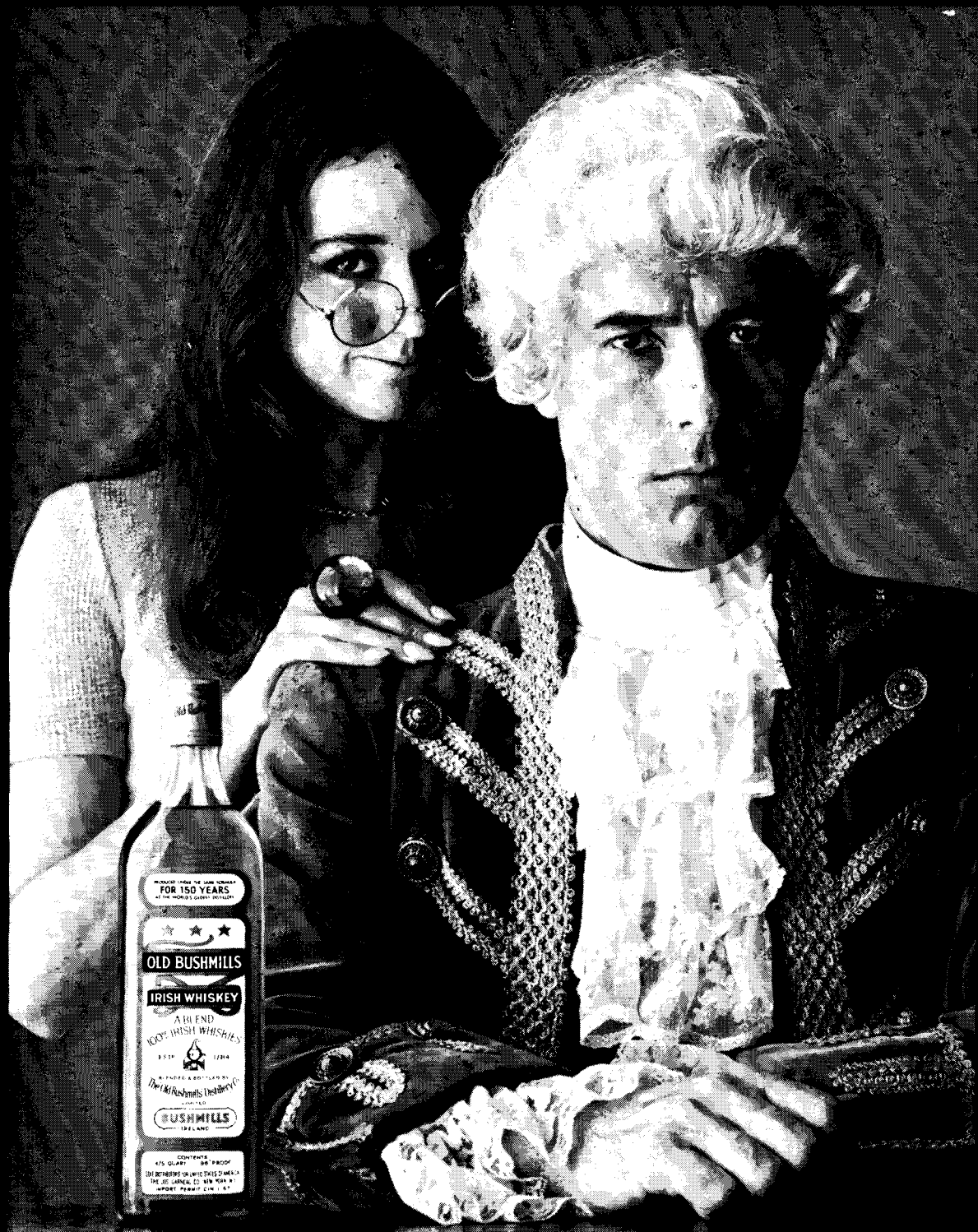
ROBERT L. COLE
New York City

Bloody Ulster

SIR: Mr. Moore's spirited and moving article on the troubles in Northern Ireland ("Bloody Ulster," September *Atlantic*) is unfair in one respect. Television did not make the troubles. Television, both the BBC and ITN (the commercial network's news agency), has been scrupulous in not creating or staging events. It has reported; it has tried to find reasons; it has not meddled or interfered. Television, indeed, by exposing the petty intolerances of religious strife, has done more than curfews or the British soldiery to bring about the uneasy

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Then there was the time Bob threw his back out. The medicines really gave him relief from the pain. The flu missed us . . . and I guess we should give the vaccine credit. And our doctor did come up with something that stopped those miserable headaches of mine. They were a nightmare while they lasted.

I had almost forgotten about the scare we had with Jimmy's ears. The doctor said it was a serious infection . . . something that could have deafened him for life. The antibiotic he prescribed cleared it up in a few days.

I've read somewhere that the average American spends about eighteen dollars a year at the pharmacy for prescriptions. Of course, our medicine bill for last year was higher than that . . . but, when I consider the values received, I've got to feel it was worth the money. We spent a lot more just patching up the old car and never thought twice about it.

*Another point of view . . .
Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, 1155 Fifteenth St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.*



lull in violence which may last until the promised reforms are carried through by the government in Stormont; because seeing themselves in all their nastiness and squalor on the small screen has made the bigots of the Falls Road and the Shanklin Road in Belfast ashamed. To the 98 percent of peaceable citizens in the Six Counties it has seemed like indecent exposure. Television has revealed the Reverend Ian Paisley as a monstrous joke out of a Fielding novel. It has shown Bernadette Devlin to be no reincarnated Joan of Arc, but a tough little moppet with more guts than brains. Contrary to Mr. Moore's assessment, Chichester-Clark has been proved by television to be desperately earnest; it may well have assured his survival in the most thankless premiership in the Western world. The poor man cannot help being part of the Ascendancy and an aristocrat. It is going to be wet and windy in Belfast for the next six months, and that will keep them off the streets. The camera crews and the commentators went back to London weeks ago.

KENNETH ADAM
*Director, BBC Television 1961-1969
Visiting Professor, Temple U.
Philadelphia, Penn.*

SIR: Whether or not one agrees with all aspects of Brian Moore's analysis of the unhappy Ulster situation, he is correct in perceiving that its solution lies in bringing this festering evil to a head and performing the necessary surgery. The proper agent in the short run must be the British government, since the source of infection is a product of their own creation and official policy. Once this is done and the evil spirits of Paisleyism exorcized, I think that the "Wearers of the Green" and their largely Scot protagonists of the Six Counties will rediscover their common humanity and basic Celtic heritage.

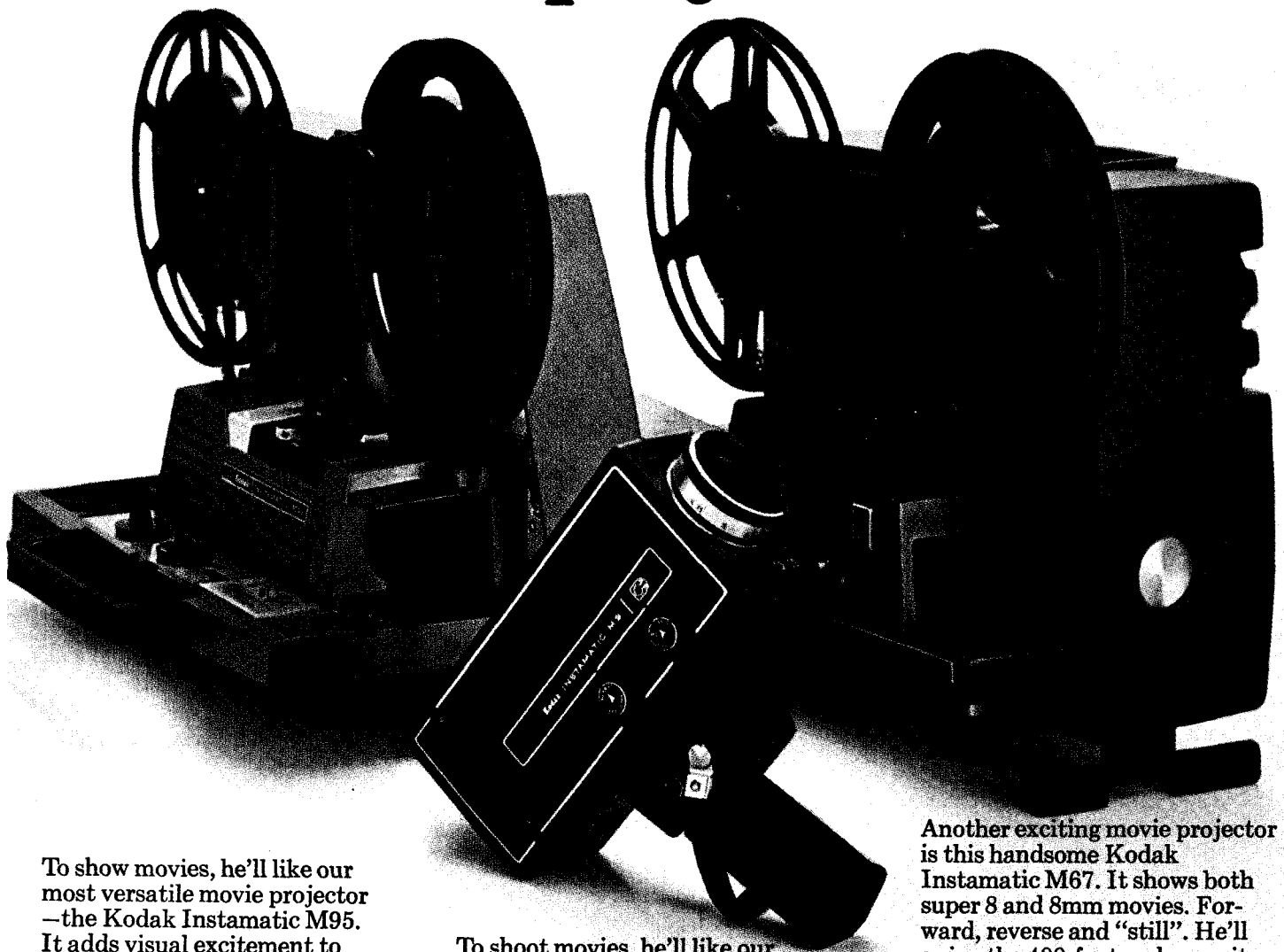
JOSEPH E. HICKEY, JR.
*Director, Hartford Chapter
American Congress for Irish Freedom
Wethersfield, Conn.*

SIR: What goes with Brian Moore, who would have England gun Northern Ireland with a fascist hand, ruling it "directly and totally"?

England, in its present temper, could no more engage in the despotism suggested than the Orange and

Just because he
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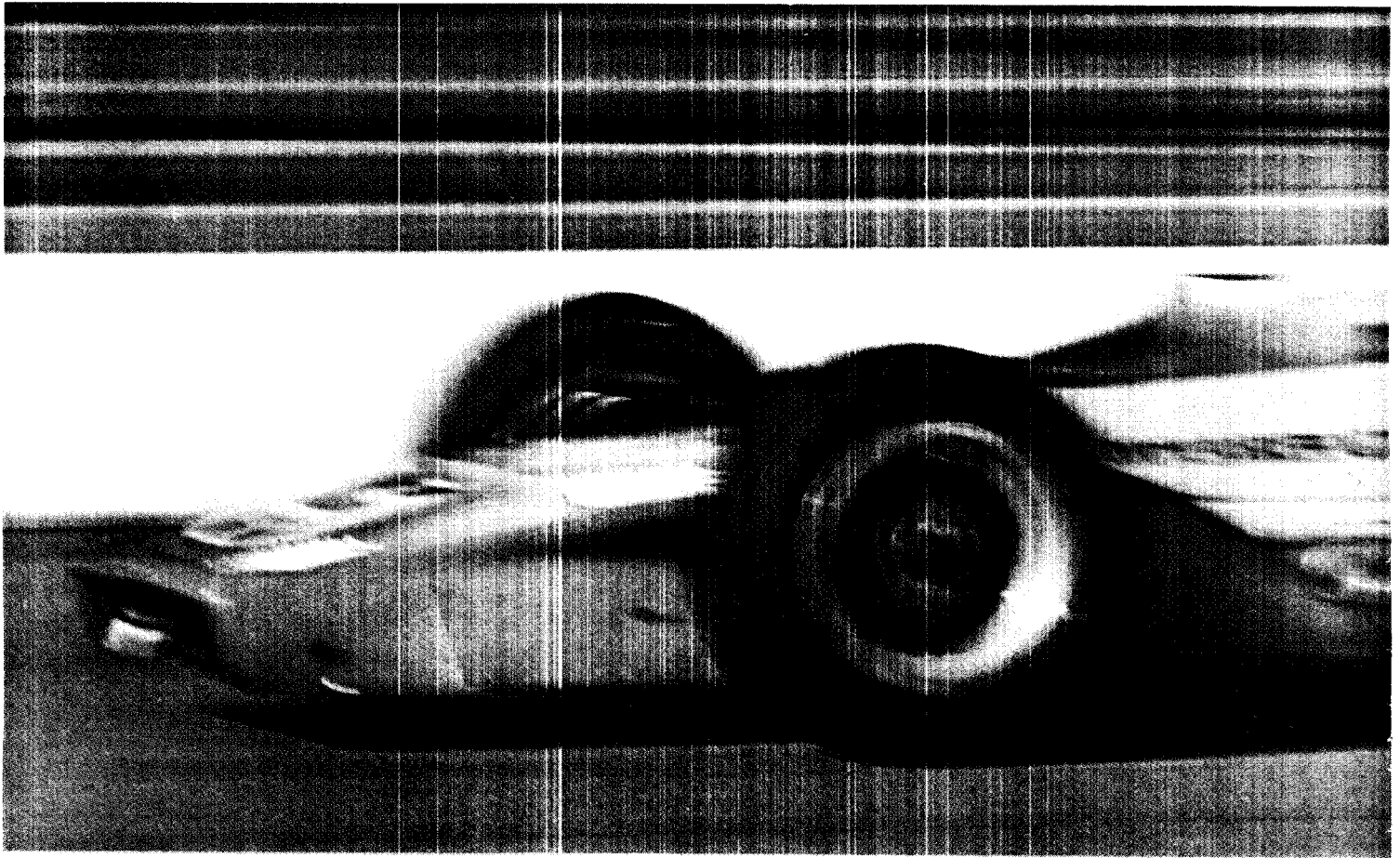
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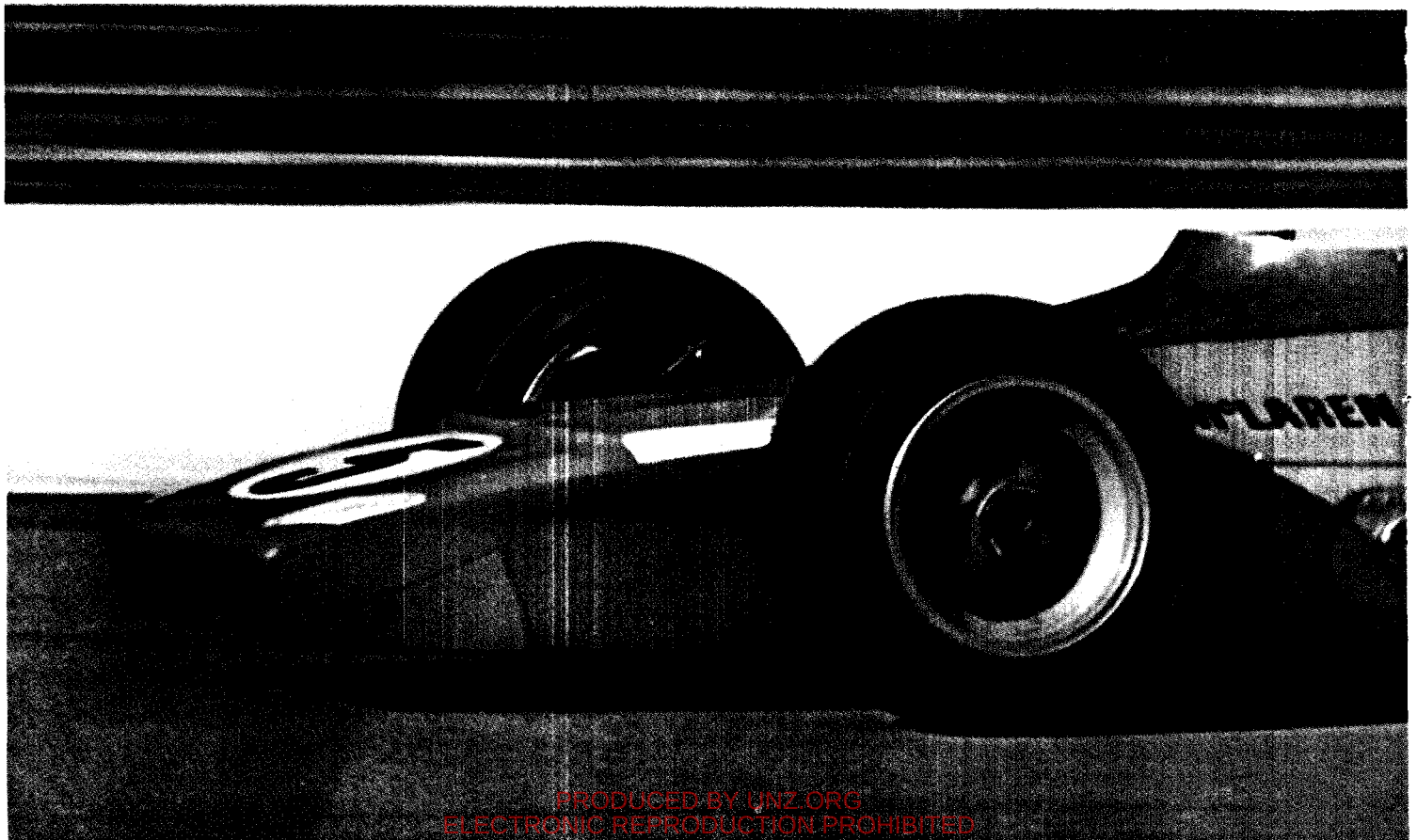
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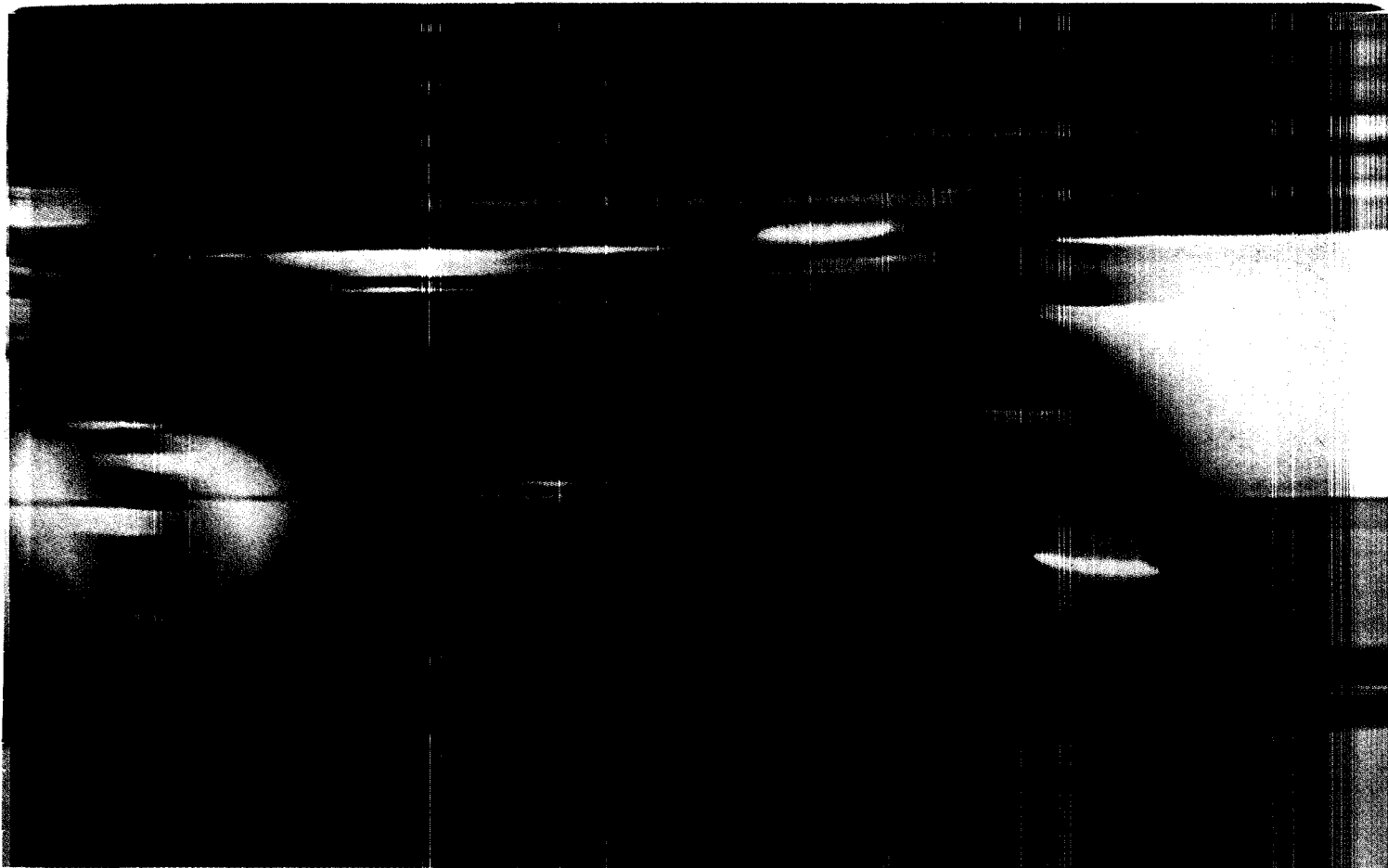
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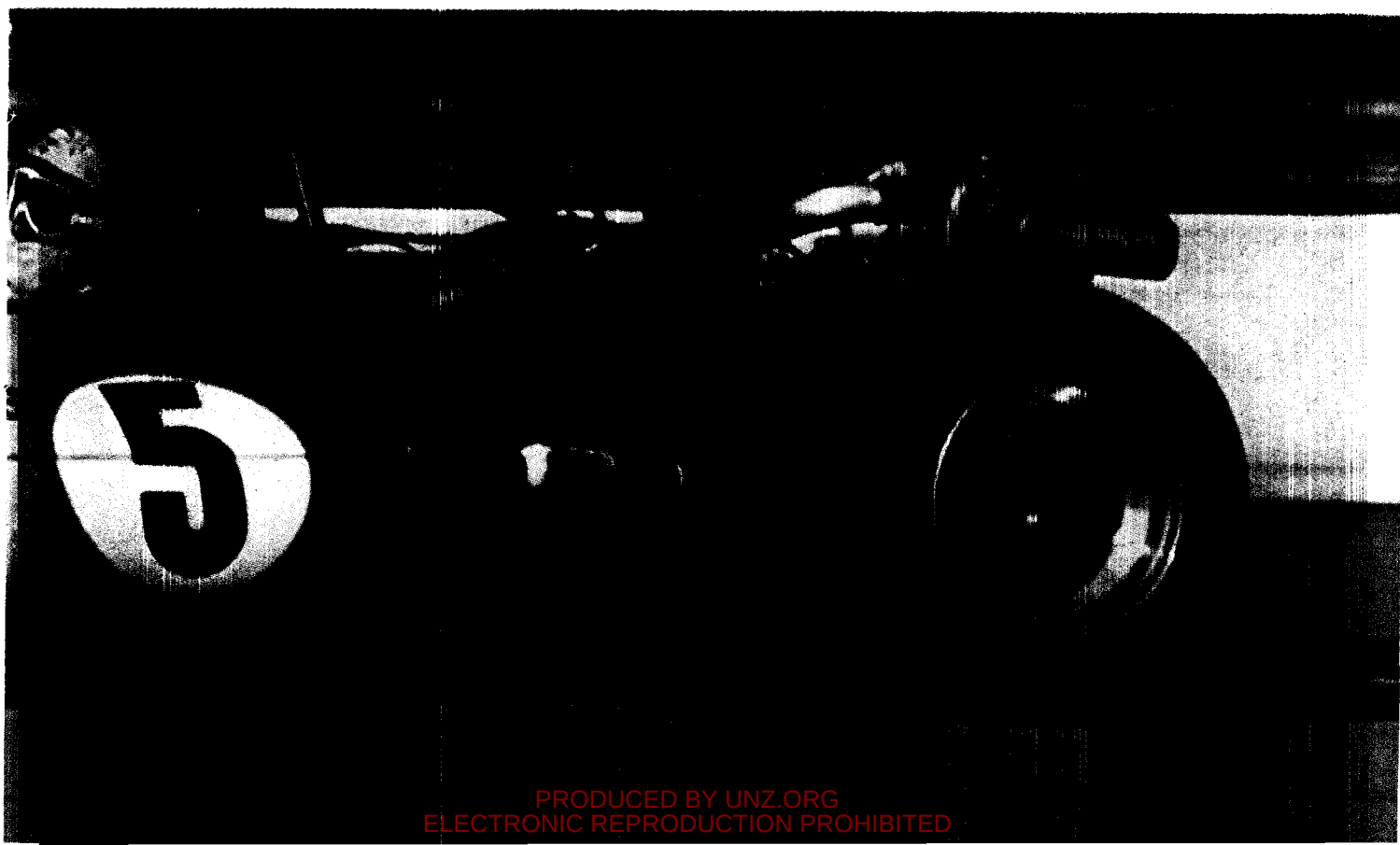
The trouble is, there are a lot of things you can't absorb in the flickering of an eye. A race car ghosting past at 200 mph is one obvious example.

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Green of Ireland's Bible Belt could come to heel and live in peace under it. The Irish, north and south, are little indoctrinated with peace. Troubles have been their way of life, their expectation. Nothing short of a Cromwell boot or an enforcement of Swift's Modest Proposal is likely to quell them. That English soldier Brian Moore sees "saving" them is in for a hard time. Hope for peace? Ha!

LAINE ORR
Oklahoma City, Okla.

C. P. Snow

SIR: A C. P. Snow fan, I was irritated by Richard Jones's harsh review of *Last Things* ("The End of the C. P. Snow Affair," September *Atlantic*). To look at the Eliot-Snow story at such length as a mere glorification of Snow's "getting on" in the English Establishment makes a flimsy argument. Certainly, the last two volumes, *Sleep of Reason* and *Last Things*, deal largely with Eliot's evaluation of his own life as any aging hero of a long-lived series would. Doubts of self-worth and accomplishment are common in autobiographies by influential men, especially when death begins ending friendships and threatening life-forces.

Mr. Jones's bitterness seems to be directed at Snow for his style of life rather than at Eliot for the telling of it. The series is a splendid diary of the way of the Establishment by a man who enjoys his part in it and yet values more the friendships determining his life in it. One can't help, in any volume, being glad to hear the news of Arthur Brown and Francis Getliffe; one can't help enjoying Eliot's cool appraisals of the various ambitions of men, his chagrin over his own mistaken appraisals and ventures, his pleasure in his final domestic contentment and in others' respect for his fairness.

Snow builds the minutiae of life into his framework of society; it is dry in the telling, for it is ordinary: people meeting for drinks, chatting after dinner, interplaying a schedule of manners with intentions discreetly stated or harshly made clear. It is Eliot's way of telling how civilized people test themselves in family issues, political crises, and acts of personal conviction. One sees the cameo of the instant that was important in the day that was routine.

Charles appears in this way, not

Now Don't Try to Reason with Me

Essays and Ironies
for a Credulous Age

WAYNE C. BOOTH



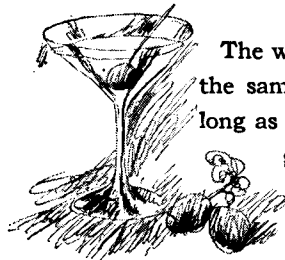
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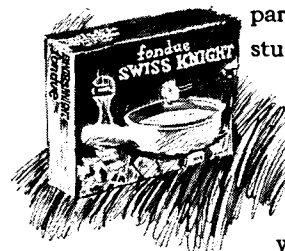
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thoroughly delineated, simply competent, eager to get on for himself, capable and thorough. But Mr. Jones chooses to question his departure as too vague, to snarl at Maurice and Margaret out of character, and to make Eliot a Babbitt, Snow a cliché.

By the way, the conversation between Eliot and Charles about a hungry boxer fighting better than a well-fed one takes place in *Sleep of Reason*, not *Last Things*.

MAUREEN V. BECK
Lawrenceville, N.J.

Mr. Jones replies:

I'm sorry that Mrs. Beck failed to get the point or tone of my article. It is crucial to my argument that Snow, in making Eliot's story so obviously his own, has forgotten that fiction needs more underpinnings, more freedom than he has allowed. The books never float free of Snow's life. They are badly realized fiction and unreliable autobiography. Mrs. Beck thinks this argument is flimsy; I think it is crucial. Mrs. Beck says I am "bitter"; I would have thought ironic was a better word; she also says I snarl at Maurice and despise two of the novels as "felt." I don't. But why go on? I'm unable to check Mrs. Beck's last point, but I accept her word and stand corrected.

American Usage

SIR: I was delighted by the extensive review of my book *American Usage: The Consensus* by Louis Kronenberger in the September *Atlantic*. The review contains a misapprehension, however; one that is understandable enough, but it deserves, I think, to be set straight.

The purpose of the book, as its title indicates, and as the preface explains, is to give the weight of opinion on disputed points of usage, as well as dissents from that opinion. Nowhere, despite Mr. Kronenberger's impression, do I suggest that the consensus is necessarily the view the reader should adopt. On the contrary, I give dissenting views as well so that the reader may choose the one that suits him best.

Mr. Kronenberger appears to think that perhaps a better jury might have been selected—one composed, as he puts it, of "superior judges who, among themselves, are virtually equal." But who is to choose such a panel, and how much acceptance

would it get no matter who chose it? It seemed to me that current dictionaries of usage, as well as current conventional dictionaries, all of which I compared, represented the best possible panel. The *American Heritage Dictionary* set up a usage panel of one hundred presumed experts on usage. In making judgments on some eight hundred disputed points, they agreed unanimously only once.

ROY H. COPPERUD
Altadena, Calif.

Mr. Kronenberger replies:

I don't for a moment question Mr. Copperud's purpose; but in practice surely the great majority of his readers will be needing and wanting guidance from his book (which has *consensus* in its very title) and cannot but be greatly impressed by consensus rulings, not to say quite of a mind to accept them.

As for "better juries," certainly there will be differences of opinion; the point, however, is not that doctors disagree, but that it is dangerous for those with poor judgment to prescribe.

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SIR: Louis Kronenberger, speculating on the origin of *Cesarean section*, says *Cesarean* comes from *cadere*, to cut. But *cadere* means to fall. *Caedere* means to cut.

RICHARD WALKDEN
Norwalk, Conn.

Advice and Consent

SIR: I want to tell you how I enjoyed, in "The Mail" of the October issue, the way Philip Roth and Dan Wakefield were satirizing talented authors having a literary dispute. It was so clever how they imitated good novelists ribbing each other about their literary accomplishments. It just goes to show you how wrong reader opinion can be. When I read *Portnoy's Complaint* and *Going All the Way* I thought they had no talent, but obviously their gifts lie in satire. Please give us more by these two literary wits.

CANDY CONN
Levittown, Penn.

SIR: Perhaps you should advise the president of Famous Writers School and other Famous Schools of a solecism in his letter to you ("The Mail,"

September *Atlantic*); he says that Miss Mitford's "allegations center around . . . two former students."

Such a combination of "centers on" and "revolves around" is not only geometrically impossible but grammatically unacceptable. Over two thirds (68 percent) of the usage panel consulted by *American Heritage Dictionary* consider Mr. Frey's construction unacceptable in writing.

ANGUS W. CLARKE, JR.
Minneapolis, Minn.

SIR: Ralph Maloney's little piece "The God Out of the Machinery" (October *Atlantic*) correctly identifies the knockout blow as a common American dramatic device, but fails to investigate its impact on some of us.

I was attracted to the cowboy pistol as a weapon of great versatility when I was about eight years old. If the hero pointed the gun at a thorough villain and shot it, the villain would fall down dead. If, however, the hero wished temporarily to restrain a basically good but obstreperous character, he turned the pistol around and used it to hit him over the head,

whereupon the guy would lie quietly on the floor for an appropriate interval.

Bothered by my four-year-old sister, I once grabbed my authentic cowboy "cap" pistol and hit her in the head with its butt end. Proving Maloney's hypothesis: my sister did not sink gently to the floor but responded with hysterical screams and developed a large lump, provoking my parents to deal violently with me.

Perhaps we could get President Nixon to view a similar demonstration of reality before he again imitates a John Wayne character as his own ideal figure of authority.

JOEL F. HENNING
Fellow, The Adlai Stevenson Institute
of International Affairs
Chicago, Ill.

The *Atlantic* welcomes communications from its readers, but can rarely accommodate letters in excess of 500 words. Light editing, for style and economy, is the rule rather than the exception, and we assume that any letter, unless otherwise stipulated, is free for publication in our monthly letters column.



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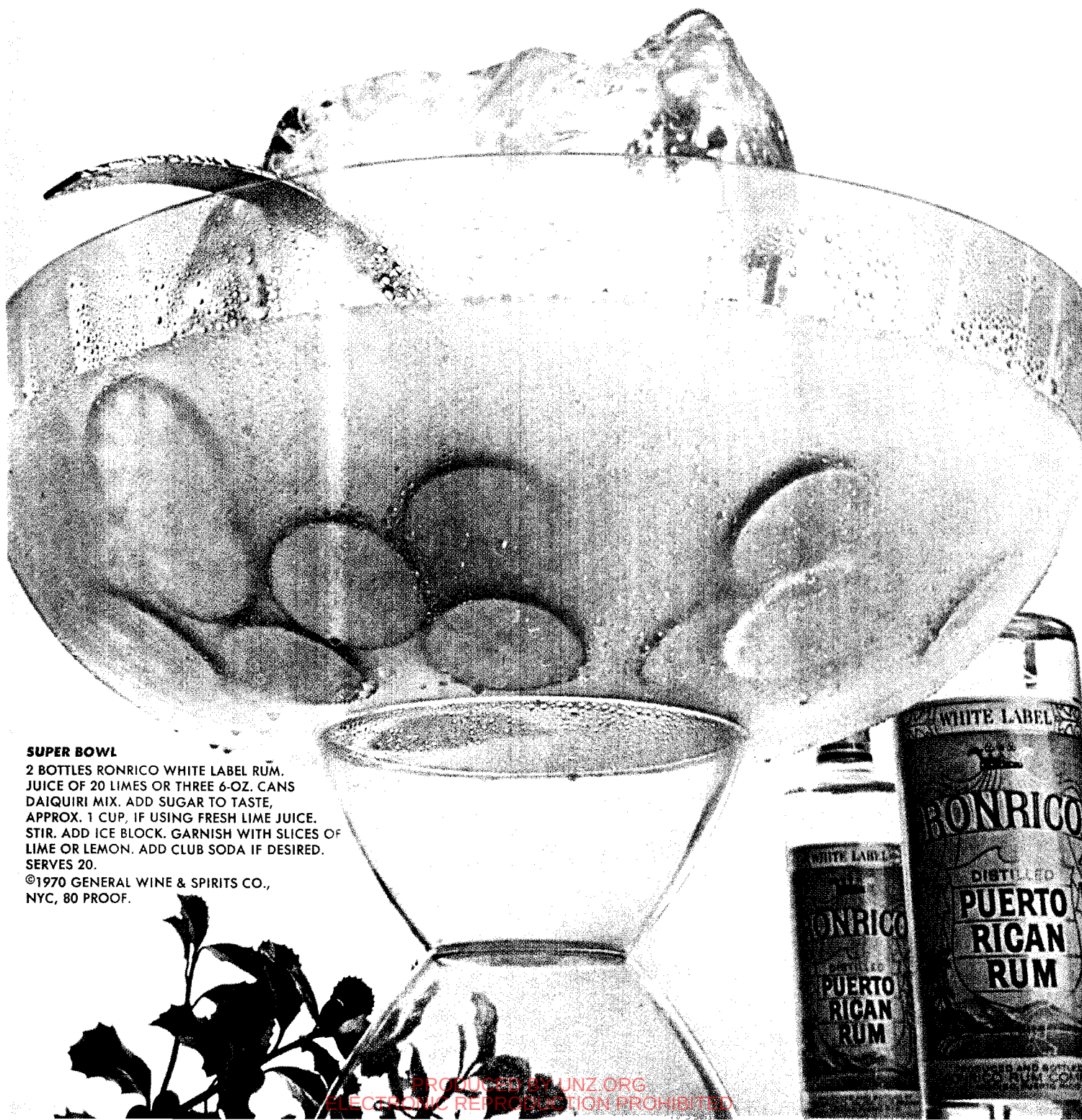
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INDIVISIBLE MAN

by Ralph Ellison and James Alan McPherson

*The Individual stands in opposition to society,
but he is nourished by it. And it is far less
important to know what differentiates him than
what nourishes him.* —André Malraux

His admiration for Ralph Ellison led James Alan McPherson into this remarkable dialogue, a combination of conversations and correspondence that says powerful things to Americans and about Americans.

July, 1969
Ralph Ellison, a pair of high-powered binoculars close to his eyes, sits by the window of his eighth-floor Riverside Drive apartment, looking down. Across the street, in the long strip of green park which parallels the Hudson River, two black boys are playing basketball. "I watch them every afternoon," he says, and offers the binoculars to me. I look down and recognize the hope of at least two major teams, ten years hence, developing. Perhaps future sociologists will say that they possess superior athletic abilities because of biological advantages peculiar to blacks; but perhaps by then each of these black boys will have gained enough of a sense of who he is to reply: "I'm good at what I do because I practiced it all my life." The encouragement of this sort of self-definition has become al-

most a crusade with Ellison. But I also recognize that if I ran down and waved my arms and shouted to them: "Did you know that Ralph Ellison watches you playing every afternoon?" they would continue to shoot at the basket and answer: "Who is Ralph Ellison?"

"He spoke at Tougaloo last year," a black exchange student at Santa Cruz told me. "I can't stand the man."

"Why?"

"I couldn't understand what he was saying. He wasn't talking to *us*."

"Did you read his book?"

"No. And I don't think I will, either. I can't stand the man."

If you ask him about the Tougaloo experience, Ellison will laugh and then tell an anecdote about the stuttering black student who said: "Mr. E-l-l-i-s-s-o-n, I r-r-e-a-d your b-b-o-o-k *The Inv-v-v-s-i-b-b-b-l-e M-m-man*. B-b-but after he-e-e-a-r-i-n-g you tonight I f-f-f-e-e-l like I j-j-j-u-u-s-t hear-r-r-d J-j-j-e-s-u-s C-c-c-h-r-r-r-i-s-t d-d-d-r-u-n-k on *Thunderbird Wine!*" And if you laugh along with him, and if you watch Ellison's eyes as you laugh, you will realize that he is only testing a deep scar to see if it has healed.

Copyright © 1970, by Ralph Ellison and James Alan McPherson.

Ellison's difficulty, one cause of all the cuts, is that matter of self-definition. At a time when many blacks, especially the young, are denying all influences of American culture, Ellison, as always, doggedly affirms his identity as a Negro-American, a product of the blending of both cultures. But more than this, he attempts to explore most of the complex implications of this burden in his fiction, his essays, his speeches, and his private life. He is nothing as simple as a "brown skinned aristocrat" (as Richard Kostelanetz characterized him in a *Shenandoah* essay-portrait last summer); rather, he is a thinking black man who has integrated his homework into the fabrics of his private life. "I don't recognize any white culture," he says. "I recognize no American culture which is not the partial creation of black people. I recognize no American style in literature, in dance, in music, even in assembly-line processes, which does not bear the mark of the American Negro." And he means it. For this reason he has difficulty reconciling some of the ideas of black nationalists, who would view black culture as separate from the broader American culture. To these people he says: "I don't recognize any black culture the way many people use the expression." And Ellison is one of the few black intellectuals who have struggled to assess the influence of the black on American culture and the relationships between the two. But, until fairly recently, not many blacks—perhaps even college-educated blacks—knew that he existed.

In 1952 he published his first novel, *Invisible Man*, which won a National Book Award; and this at a time when the white critical Establishment was less eager to recognize literary achievement by black Americans. Now, almost nineteen years later, he is still the only black American who has received this honor. The novel has gone through twenty paperback printings and was judged, in a 1965 *Book Week* poll of two hundred authors, critics, and editors, "the most distinguished single work published in the last twenty years." A second book, a collection of essays and interviews called *Shadow and Act*, was published in 1964 and is essential reading for any attempt at understanding Ellison, the man or the artist. While *Invisible Man* is a story of one man's attempt to understand his society and himself, the essays outline Ellison's own successful struggle to master the craft of the writer and to understand, and then affirm, the complexities of his own rich cultural experience.

He likes to call himself a college dropout because he completed only three years of a music major at

Tuskegee Institute before coming to New York in 1936. Before that he was a shoeshine boy, a jazz musician, a janitor, a free-lance photographer, and a man who hunted game during the Depression to keep himself alive.

Today he is a member, and a former vice president, of the National Institute of Arts and Letters; a member of New York's Century club and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; and a trustee of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. He is a former teacher at Bard, Rutgers, and Chicago and presently Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities at New York University. He has an interest in noncommercial television which began with his work on the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television, and continues with his trusteeships in the Educational Broadcasting Corporation, and the National Citizens' Committee for Broadcasting. Among his awards are listed the Russwurm Award, the Medal of Freedom (awarded by President Johnson), five honorary Ph.D's, and one of the highest honors which France can bestow on a foreign writer: Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres, awarded to him in 1970 by the French Minister of Cultural Affairs, André Malraux. But all these experiences seem to have equal weight in his mind; all seem to have given equal access to information, equal opportunity for observation of the culture. And he is as likely to begin a discussion with some observation made when he was a shoeshine boy as he is to mention the first names of some of America's most respected writers and critics.

His success does not prove, as one writer says, that "a fatherless American Negro really does have the opportunity to become the author of one of America's greatest novels as well as an aristocratic presence and an all but universally respected literary figure." Ellison's achievements are too enormous to be reduced to a sociological cliché, a rhetorical formulation. If anything, his success proves that intelligence, perseverance, discipline, and love for one's work are, together, too great a combination to be contained, or even defined, in terms of race.

Although he lives in New York and has access to literary and intellectual areas, Ellison seems to have very limited contact with the black writers who also live there. Yet his shadow lies over all their writers' conferences, and his name is likely to be invoked, and defamed, by any number of the participants at any conference. One man has said that he would like to shoot Ellison. Another, whom Ellison has never met, has for almost ten years blamed Ellison for his not receiving the last Prix de Rome Award, given by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. On the other hand, a growing number of young black writers, among them Ernest J. Gaines, Cecil Brown, Michael Harper, Ishmael Reed, and Al Young, are quick to admit their respect for him.

He reads the work of black writers, dismisses some of it, and is always willing to give an endorse-

Ralph Ellison, author of *Invisible Man*, a novel, and *Shadow and Act*, a collection of essays, is Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities at New York University. James Alan McPherson, an *Atlantic* contributing editor, is the author of *Hue and Cry*, a book of short stories.

ment. And although he is very protective of his time, his telephone number is listed in the Manhattan directory, and he will usually grant an interview or a few hours of conversation in the afternoon (his working day usually ends at 4:00 P.M.) to anyone who is insistent.

"A fellow called me one morning," Ellison chuckles, lighting up a cigar, "said he just had to see me. So I consented. I went to the door, and there was a brown-skinned fellow from the Village. He brought a bottle of wine, several records, and four attempts at short stories. I looked at these things, and they weren't really stories. So I asked: 'What do you want me to tell you?' He said: 'Well, what I want you to do is to tell me, should I just write, or should I tell the truth?'" Ellison pauses to laugh deep in his chest. "I said: 'Tell the truth.'"

"He came to Oberlin in April of 1969," a black girl in Seattle recalled. "His speech was about how American black culture had blended into American white culture. But at the meeting with the black caucus after the speech, the black students said: 'You don't have anything to tell us.'"

"What did he say?"

"He just accepted it very calmly. One girl said to him: 'Your book doesn't mean anything because in it you're shooting down Ras the Destroyer, a rebel leader of black people.'"

"What was his answer?"

"He said: 'Remember now, this book was written a long time ago. This is just one man's view of what he saw, how he interpreted what he saw. I don't make any apologies for it.' Well, she went on to tell him: 'That just proves that you're an Uncle Tom.'"

Another of Ellison's problems, one peculiar to any black who attempts to assert his own individuality in his own terms, is that he challenges the defense mechanisms of the black community. Because of a history of enforced cohesiveness, some blacks have come to believe in a common denominator of understanding, even a set number of roles and ideas which are assumed to be useful to the community. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, social workers, some orthodox thinkers, some orthodox writers are accepted—as long as they do not insist on ideas which are foreign to the community's own sense of itself. But when a black man attempts to think beyond what has been thought before, or when he asserts a vision of reality which conflicts with or challenges the community's conception, there is a movement, sometimes unconscious, to bring him back into line or, failing that, to ostracize him. The "mass man" of sociological terminology is the "right-on man" of black slang, gliding smoothly and simplistically, and perhaps more comfortably, over questionable assumptions, and reducing himself to a cliché in the process. For a black thinker, such as Ellison, this

assertion of individual vision is especially painful because the resultant ostracism carries with it the charge of "selling out" or "trying to be white." Yet a white thinker who challenges assumptions held by whites about themselves is not charged with "trying to be black." The underlying assumption is that whites have a monopoly on individuality and intelligence, and in order for a black man to lay claim to his own he must, necessarily, change color.

In response to charges by attackers that he is a "token Negro" because he is very often the only black serving on cultural commissions, Ellison says: "All right, if you don't want me on, I'll resign. But you had better put a *cardboard Negro* in my place because when decisions are made which will affect black people you had better make sure that those people who make the decisions remember that you exist and are forced to make sure that some of your interests are being met."

This impulse toward leveling, however, is not confined to the black community. It is a minority-group reaction. And while Ellison remembers a black professor at Tuskegee who tore up a leather-bound volume of Shakespeare's plays to discourage his interest in literature, he also remembers a white professor friend who said: "Ah, here's Ralph again, talking about America. There's no goddamn America out there."

"At Oberlin," the Seattle girl said, "one of the ideas they couldn't accept was Ellison's statement that black styles had historically been incorporated into American life. He went on to say that in the future, don't be surprised if white people begin to wear Afros because that's now a part of American popular culture. Well, the kids went out screaming, 'Who is he to insult what we wear? No honky could wear an Afro. They're stealing what is ours.'"

One year later disenchanted white youth, on both coasts and in between, are sporting their versions of the Afro.

Iowa City, Iowa
June, 1969

Dear Mr. Ellison:

I would like to come and talk with you. . . .

New York, New York
June, 1969

Dear Mr. McPherson:

Will you be in the East on July 7? I can see you at 3:00 P.M.

He is as practiced a listener as he is a speaker, and gives even the most naïvely put question thorough consideration before responding. He is a bit guarded at first, perhaps unwinding from a day at his desk, perhaps adjusting to the intellectual level of his guest. Then he begins talking,

occasionally pausing to light a cigar, occasionally glancing out the window at the street, the park, the river beyond. After a while you both are trading stories and laughing while Mrs. Ellison makes noises in the kitchen, just off the living room. A parakeet flutters into the room. Ellison calls it, imitating its chirps, and the bird comes and hovers near his hand. "Have you ever heard a dog talk?" he asks.

"No."

We go into his study, and he plays a tape of a dog clearly imitating the rhythm and pitch of a human voice saying "hello." We listen again, and laugh again. Mrs. Ellison calls us to dinner. It is difficult enjoying the food and digesting his conversation at the same time.

"Ralph, stop talking and let him eat," Mrs. Ellison says.

After dinner we move back into the living room and continue the conversation. Finally Ellison's dog, Tucka Tarby, comes into the room and walks back and forth between us. Then you realize that it is well after midnight and that you have put a serious dent in the essential personal rhythm of a writer's day. Tucka has been patient, waiting for his evening walk. Ellison puts on an army jacket, and we go down in the elevator. This is an old building, just on the edge of Harlem, and most of the tenants are black. The lobby has colored tiles, a high ceiling, and live flowers protected by glass. "I've lived here for eighteen years," he says. "But it wasn't until 1964 that some of the people found out I was a writer." Tucka pulls us up 150th Street toward Broadway. We shake hands, and he and the dog walk off into the Harlem night.

"I think that what made it hard for him," the Seattle girl said, "was that LeRoi Jones was coming to Oberlin that next day. The kids figured that Jones the Master is coming, so let's get rid of this cat. But I think he's very gutsy, in a day like today with all these so-called militants trying to run him into the ground, coming to Oberlin saying to the kids: 'You are American, not African.'"

"Did anyone come to his defense?"

"One of the teachers stopped the meeting at one point and said: 'Would you please listen to what the man has to say? You're sitting here criticizing, and some of you haven't even read the damn book.'"

Among his peers Ellison's presence or even the mention of his name causes the immediate arming of intellectual equipment. There can be no soft-pedaling, no relaxation of intellect where he is involved. At Brown University in November of 1969, novelists and critics gathered at the annual Wetmore Lecture to discuss form, the future of the novel, and each other. Critic Robert Scholes opened one discussion on form by reading from Ellison's acceptance speech before the National Book Award Committee. "Ah, Ellison," Leslie Fiedler said, throwing his arm out in a gesture of dismissal. "He's a black Jew."

Ellison chuckles. "Leslie's been trying to make me a Jew for years," he says. "I have to look at these things with a Cold Oklahoma Negro Eye. But someone should have said that *all* us old-fashioned Negroes are Jews."

Iowa City, Iowa
August, 1969

Dear Mr. Ellison:

From what I have read of recent American fiction, I sense a shift in interest on the part of the reading public and, consequently, in the focus of those who write the books which become popular. The trend seems to be a movement away from traditional forms (the naturalism, for example, which has always been so convenient for black writers) and a change in content as well. Science fiction, mythological experiences, journalistic accounts, and pornography, for example, are very popular now. Do you see this as a passing trend, or is something more revolutionary at work? And if these present interests are only temporary, do you think that the more serious areas of the black cultural experience will still be of sufficient interest to sustain an audience for serious black writers?

RALPH ELLISON: "I think that we are always going to have periods in which we will shift toward an interest in the pornographic. But this country has a tendency to get fed up with any novelty very quickly, and then we tend to put things back into perspective. We like novelty. It's pretty shocking to have a book which has a theme about masturbation. That's interesting, but not unexpected; we are always interested in revealing that which is supposed to be unrevealable. That's part of the American thing. But I don't think that this indicates that our interest in form has changed.

"I think that our sense of formal completeness is a psychological thing that is rooted in our sense of the seasons, in our sense of lightness and darkness. I think the tendency now is to feel that an interest in form is beside the point. But I also note that those people who tell you this and who write in a supposed disregard of form are always trying to get a group of people who will accept their form. There is no art without form. The form becomes a convention. And once you get enough people to accept that as a proper way of doing a novel, of writing a play, then you have imposed a new convention of form. So you can say that form is conventional on the one hand, but at the same time our sense of a beginning, middle, and end is built into human biology. And that isn't going to go away.

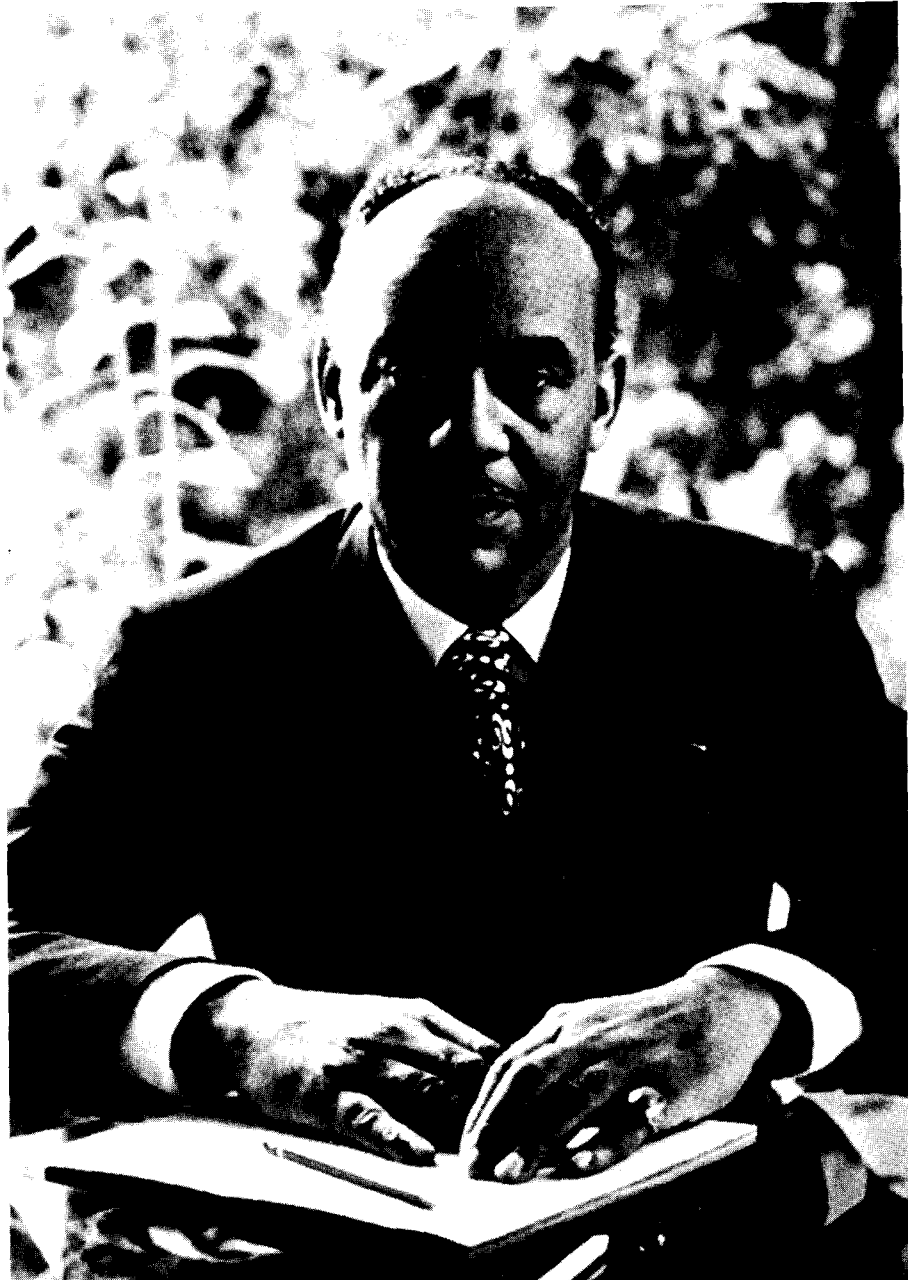
"One plays around with form, extends form, contracts form—depending on the convention popular at the time; but I don't think you ever get completely away from it. And I think that writers who tell themselves that they don't *have* to learn form are deluding themselves, because it is in form itself that

a great part of the psychology of the characters, the reader, and the writer, is involved. . . .

"I just don't think that we can escape from form, because when you write a piece of fiction, you write it to be read. I'm reminded that when Joyce was writing *Finnegan's Wake* he was spending as much time writing to critics and friends as to how those sections which were being published over a period of years were supposed to be read. He was setting them up for a formal reception of a new form.

"As for the future popularity of black writers, I'm hesitant to make a prediction because so many of them seem to be still caught up at the point of emphasizing *inwardness* without emphasizing the inward-outwardness. There is a rhetoric of fiction, and in order to master the rhetoric of the form, you have to be aware of the people who are outside your immediate community. And the rhetoric depends upon not only a knowledge of human passion, but the specific situations in which that passion is expressed: the manners, the formal patterns, and so on, as well as the political issues around which they are clustered. So that if our black writers are going to become more influential in the broader community, they will do it in terms of style: by imposing a style upon a sufficient area of American life to give other readers a sense that this is true, that here is a revelation of reality. I think that this is the way it works. And this is going to depend upon writers who get a clear sense of what they're doing.

"Black writers could sustain a place for themselves in American literature. It's possible, but I couldn't predict it because I don't know what's going on. It's just hard for me to tell. There is a lot of activity, and very often the people who make the breakthroughs are not the people who are doing a lot of talking and getting the attention. They are very quietly trying to make something new out of their experience and out of their experience of literature. I can just say that I hope that as we learn to translate and to interpret the intricacies of



Ralph Ellison

our experience as a group of people, we can do it with enough art and with an impact which will raise it from the specific to the universal."

Ellison is not only interested in the fiction written by young black writers; he is concerned about young black people in general: what they are thinking, what they are doing, what their ambitions are. But his knowledge of them is limited to sessions during speaking engagements, letters, and what he hears from the media. "A hell of a lot of them are reading my book," he observes with obvious pleasure. "I have a way of checking this. And for a long time they didn't read much of anything."

Yet he worries that despite the increased educational opportunities available to them, young black people are becoming too involved in, and almost symbolic of, the campus reactions against intellectual discipline, the life of the mind. "It's too damn bad," he says. "You see that men are now analyzing the song of the whales, the talk of dolphins, planning to go to the moon; computer technology is becoming more and more humanized and miniaturized; great efforts are being made to predetermine sex, to analyze cells, to control the life process in the human animal. And all of this is done with the *mind*. And indeed," he goes on, "the irony is that we've never really gotten away from that old *body* business; the Negro as symbolic of *instinctual* man. Part of my pride in being what I am is that as a dancer, as a physical man . . ."—and again that distant chuckle comes from deep within his chest—"I bet you I can outdance, outriff most of these intellectuals who're supposed to have come back." Now he is serious again. "*But that isn't the problem, damnit! I was born doing this! It's a glorious thing to know the uses of the body and not to be afraid of it. But that has to be linked to the mind.* I don't see any solution for literary art. If you're a dancer, fine. If you're a musician, fine. But what are you going to do as a writer, or what are you going to do as a critic?" He sighs, as if he were weighed down by these considerations.

"I find this very interesting," he continues, "but not new. When I think about Tuskegee and people with whom I went to school, I know that over and over again they really did not extend themselves because they didn't have the imagination to look thirty years ahead to a point where there would be a place for them in the broader American society, had they been prepared."

He says: "I understand ambition; I understand the rejection of goals because they're not self-fulfilling. I've turned down too many things starting as a youngster."

He looks out the window toward the Hudson, then continues in a lower tone. "I was married once before, and one reason that marriage came to an end was that my in-laws were disgusted with me, thought I had no ambition, because I didn't want a job in the Post Office. And here I was with a dream of myself writing the symphony at twenty-six which would equal anything Wagner had done at twenty-six. This is where my ambitions were. So I can understand people getting turned off on that level. But what I can't understand is people who do not master a technique or discipline which will get them to a point where they can actually see that it's not what they want or that something else is demanded. But over and over again I see black kids who are dropping out or rejecting intellectual discipline as though what exists now will always exist and as though they don't have the possibility of changing it by using these disciplines as techniques

to affirm *their* sense of what a human life should be. It's there where I get upset."

He has a habit of pausing whenever the discussion begins to touch areas pregnant with emotion, as if careful of remaining within a certain context. But on some subjects he is likely to continue. "I also get upset when I see announcements of prizes and medical discoveries and scientific advances, and I don't see any black names or black faces. I believe that we are *capable*," he says. "I believe that there are enough unique features in our background to suggest solutions to problems which seem very, very far removed from our social situation."

The duality of cultural experience which Ellison insists on in his writing is acted out in his professional and personal life. He is just as much at home, just as comfortable, in a Harlem barbershop as he is as a panelist before the Southern Historical Association exchanging arguments with C. Vann Woodward, Robert Penn Warren, and William Styron. He is a novelist well respected by his peers (when his name is mentioned in almost any literary circle, there will invariably be an inquiry about his current project), and he brings to bear the same respect for craft in an introduction to the stories of Stephen Crane as he uses to evaluate the work of black artist Romare Bearden. Yet, precisely because of his racial identity, he is also the leading black writer in American letters. And while he disclaims this position as "an accident, part luck and part a product of the confusion over what a black writer is and what an American writer is," the reality is there, nevertheless, and has to be coped with.

JAMES McPHERSON: "It seems to me that much of our writing has been, and continues to be, sociological because black writers have been concerned with protesting black humanity and racial injustice to the larger society in those terms most easily understood by nonblack people. It also seems to me that we can correct this limitation either by defining and affirming the values and cultural institutions of our people for their education or by employing our own sense of reality and our own conception of what human life should be to explore, and perhaps help define, the cultural realities of contemporary American life. In either case, do you think that naturalism is sufficient to deal adequately with the subtle complexities of contemporary black cultural experience?"

RALPH ELLISON: "I don't think that naturalism is enough for us because so much that is negative has been made of our naturalistic or our physical variations from other Americans. Besides, the implicit mode of Negro-American culture is abstract. And this comes from the very nature of our relationship to this country.

"First, we came from Africa. We had to learn English. We had, in other words, to create ourselves as a people—and this I take right down to the racial,

the bloodlines, the mingling of African blood with bloodlines indigenous to the New World. A few people can trace their connections back to a given African tribe, but for most of us, no. We can't even trace our blood back only to Africa because most of us are part Indian, Spanish, Irish, part any and every damn thing. But *culturally*, we represent a synthesis of any number of these elements. And that's a problem of abstraction in itself; it's abstraction and recombining.

"When we began to build up a sense of ourselves, we did it by abstracting from the Bible, abstracting the myths of the ancient Jews, the early Christians, modifying them as we identified with these people, and projecting ourselves. This was an abstract process. We knew that we were not white; we knew that we were not Hebrews; but we also knew something else: we knew that we didn't *have* to be in order to make these abstractions and recombinations. This was a creative process, one of the most wonderful things which ever happened on the face of the earth. This is one of the great strengths which now people seem to want to deny. But this was the *reunification* of a shattered group of people.

"Now, American Negro music was not simply the product of remembered African rhythms. It took Western melodic forms and modified them; it took Western rhythmical forms and combined them, and produced a music. American Negro dance is a result of abstracting the courtly dances which were danced in the manor houses. The jigs and the flings which the Irish and the Scotch had brought over from the British Isles were appropriated by the slaves and combined with African dance patterns. And out of this abstraction and recombination you got the basis of the American choreography.

"Our experience in the acculturative process differed from the European's because he didn't have the necessity. This can be said about American culture in general: it *was* an extension of European culture. What is new about it is the presence of the African influence as projected by black Americans. Irish folklore, English folklore, Scottish folklore, the music and so on all found a place in colonial America. Not only was there a conscious effort to preserve the forms of high European culture, but at the same time there was a vernacular style—the speech which people spoke on the streets as they came to grips with the nature of the New World: the plants, the rivers, the climate, and so on. There was a modification of language necessary to communicate with the slaves, with people who came from other parts of Europe. All of these created a tension which in turn created what we call the vernacular style. Our technology was vernacular. And it grew so fast precisely because they had to throw off the assumptions of European technology and create one which was in keeping with conditions in the New World: the availability of materials, the wide distances, the need to build things which could be quickly assem-

bled and abandoned without too much waste. But, nevertheless, on the level of the educated classes, there was an effort to preserve the European heritage which did not stop when we made a revolutionary break with England.

"But *we* didn't have that. We had some of the same pressures to assert identity in another place at another time—which the Irish and the Germans had. But *they* could do it. And you had this fact too: these people came in waves, but many of them still spoke the brogue. Other people from other European countries, the first generation at least, didn't speak English. But we happen to be a people who can't remember when we didn't speak English. So we had that to help us, and the Bible, the language of the King James version, to shape whatever literary efforts or religious efforts we made. And nothing else. We couldn't fall back on African language. Thus we see immediately that there was a vast difference between our options and the options of Americans of European background."

Before he accepted the professorship at New York University, Ellison earned a good part of his income from college speaking engagements. He accepted around twenty each year. He tends to favor the East Coast or Midwest and avoids the West Coast, partially because of the great distance and partially because of the political nature of the West. He is very much in demand, although his fee is usually \$1500 to \$2000. In the past year he has spoken at such colleges as Millsaps, East Texas State, Rockland, Illinois, West Point, and Iowa State University at Ames.

He takes pride in being able to deliver a ninety-minute speech without the aid of notes. He will make some few digressions to illuminate his points, but will always pick up the major thread and carry it through to its preconceived end.

March, 1970

Ralph Ellison stands on a stage broad enough to seat a full symphony orchestra. Before him, packed into a massive new auditorium of gray concrete and glass and deep red carpets, 2700 Ames students strain to hear the words of the man billed as "Ralph Ellison: Writer." Ames is almost an agricultural school, and its students still have fraternity rows, beer parties, frat pins and ties, white shirts and jackets. Most of them are the beardless sons of farmers and girls whose ambitions extend only as far as engagement by the senior year. The American Dream still lingers here, the simple living, the snow, the hamburgers and milk shakes, the country music and crickets and corn. This is the breadbasket of the country, the middle of Middle America. And yet, ninety miles away in Iowa City, students torn from these same roots are about to burn buildings. "When the pioneers got to your part of the country," he

tells them, speaking again of the vernacular, the functional level of the American language, "there was no word for 'prairie' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*." His speech is on "The Concept of Race in American Literature." And he delivers just that. But it is abstract, perhaps over the heads of many of the students there (even though parts of it later appeared as a *Time* essay in the issue on "Black America"). Still, the students are quiet, respectful, attempting to digest. Speaking of the ethnic blending which began with the formation of the country, he says: "And, to make it brief, there was a whole bunch of people from Africa who were not introduced by the British, but quite some time before were introduced into what later became South Carolina by the Spanish. Whereupon they immediately began to revolt—" Here loud applause floats down to the lower audience from black students in the second balcony. Ellison pauses. Then continues: "—and went wild, and started passing for Indians. I hear a lot about black people passing for white, but remember, they first started passing for Indians." There is some giggling and laughter at this. But, behind me, I notice a black student cringing.

During the question-and-answer session afterwards, the students ask the usual things: the conflict between Richard Wright and James Baldwin, the order of symbols in *Invisible Man*. One girl wants to know if racial miscegenation is a necessary ingredient of racial integration. He laughs. "Where'd you get that word?" he says. And answers: "I don't think that any of us Americans wants to lose his ethnic identity. This is another thing which has been used to manipulate the society in terms of race. Some few people might want to lose their identities; this has happened. But I would think that the very existence of such strong Negro-American influences in the society, the style, the way things are done, would indicate that there's never been the desire to lose that. There's just too much self-congratulation in so much of Negro-American expression. They wouldn't want to give that up." He says: "The thing that black people have been fighting for for so long was the opportunity to decide whether they *wanted* to give it up or not. And the proof is that in this period when there is absolutely more racial freedom than has ever existed before, you have the most militant rejection of integration. These are individual decisions which will be made by a few people. But if I know anything about the human being, what *attracts* a man to a woman has usually been picked up very early from the first woman he's had contact with. There is enough of a hold of tradition, of ways of cooking, of ways of just relaxing, which comes right out of the family circle, to keep us in certain groups."

At the reception after the speech, the whites dominate all three rooms; the few black students cluster together in one. Ellison moves between the two, sometimes almost tearing himself away from

the whites. He talks to the black students about books, LeRoi Jones, Malcolm X, color, their personal interests. They do not say much. A white woman brings a book for his autograph; a professor gives a nervous explanation of the source of the miscegenation question: the girl has been reading Norman Podhoretz's essay "My Negro Problem and Ours" in his course. Ellison smiles and shifts back and forth on his feet like a boxer. Everyone is pleasantly high. The black students, still in a corner, are drinking Coke. I am leaving, eager to be out in the Iowa snow. We shake hands. "This is awkward," he says. "Call me Ralph and I'll call you Jim."

Santa Cruz, California
April, 1970

Dear Ralph:

In 1961 you predicted that a period would come "when Negroes are going to be wandering around because we've had this thing (assumed restrictions imposed by sociological conditions) thrown at us so long that we haven't had a chance to discover what in our own background is really worth preserving." Despite the present movement toward "black awareness" and despite the attempts of blacks to assert their own values and attitudes over those of the white group, do you think that we are any further along in discovering or defining whatever there is in our cultural traditions, beyond reactions to externally imposed restrictions, which has contributed to our strength as a people?

ELLISON: "I think that too many of our assertions continue to be in response to whites. I think that we're polarized by the very fact that we keep talking about 'black awareness' when we really should be talking about black American awareness, an awareness of where we fit into the total American scheme, where our influence is. I tell white kids that instead of talking about black men in a white world or black men in white society, they should ask themselves how black *they* are because black men have been influencing the values of the society and the art forms of the society. How many of their parents fell in love listening to Nat King Cole?

"We did not develop as a people in isolation. We developed within a context of white people. Yes, we have a special awareness because our experience has, in certain ways, been uniquely different from that of white people; but it was not absolutely different. A poor man is a poor man whether he's black or white. A white man might rationalize and get a sense of satisfaction out of his whiteness, but as far as meat on the table and clothes on the back are concerned, he's still a poor man. And if he isn't in the position to *get* more clothes, then he's in no better position than the black person. And that's one of the things that various groups are now be-

ginning to emphasize: the unity between black and white on an economic level, a unity of interest between poor people, black, white, Indians, Mexican-Americans. To move into some sort of black awareness which is narcissistic is a mistake because it's false. For me to try to look at American literature written by whites—say Melville, for example—and not know that I'm there, my people are there, not just in terms of character but in terms of symbols, in terms of vision, in terms of speech, in terms of mythology. . . . The stuff is there. If you go back and look at photographs or paintings, Early American or nineteenth-century, you'll always see *us*. We're there. We are part of the scene. Constance Rourke [American cultural historian (1885-1941), author of *The Roots of American Culture*] is right when she points out the role we have played as archetypal figures. So the movement backwards to get a fuller sense of ourselves, to get a sense of the community and its needs, of the traditions and so on, is good. There's an assumption that every black person knows the traditions. Many don't. But many do. And those who don't should talk to those who do.

"That's one of the advantages of a Southern upbringing: a lot of things which got lost up here were not lost back there. I mean just things you took for granted, things I assumed everybody knew. I had friends who grew up in New Jersey telling me that Southern Negroes didn't know how to box. I said: 'Where the hell do you think Jack Johnson came from?' But they had built up that notion of Northern Black Superiority. I remember serving on a ship during the war where one of the messmen referred to Southern Negroes as 'boogies.' I said: 'Well, *I'm* from the South.' And he said: 'But you're not one of *them*.' He was just as prejudiced against Southern blacks as whites were. But you got that sense of a loss of continuity which has to be regained. Part of the tragedy—one of the pathetic and ironic things—about Stokely Carmichael's activities is that he went down South and condescended. No one has pointed this out, but there was a hell of a lot of condescension from this West Indian boy toward the blacks. And he did a lot of damage.

"You can look at Booker T. Washington, for example—and I'm very critical of the man; but any objective view which isn't hung up on the black-white issue as such, and which tries to look at the man in terms of the distribution of power, would make you realize that Washington was one of the most powerful politicians the South had ever known. That was reality. You don't have to like the circumstances which *allowed* him to assume that kind of power—and I'm talking about his relationship with government and great economic powers. We have to come to grips with this. It has to be a part of our awareness of who we are. And simply by moving back and saying, 'Well, this was slavery, and this man said that we should get education and not worry about political rights' is not enough. We

have to learn *why* DuBois never became the same kind of power figure, no matter what we think of DuBois. We have to know what happened to those linkages with power after Washington left. We've got to quit imposing second-class standards on ourselves. When you tell me that a man is a great sociologist, and you tell me he was a student for a while of Max Weber's, then I am compelled, out of my own sense of Negro humanity, to compare his achievements with those of Weber. My wish, my hope, my dream is that he achieve more than Weber; but if he didn't, damn it, he just didn't. And the next man who comes along will have to go beyond not only him but beyond Max Weber. And our relationship to reality is such that, given the mind and the energy and industry, our social thinkers *will* go beyond. But they won't go beyond by simply receiving the ideas handed down to them and just making it by simply repeating these ideas. They have to be more creative.

"We need to get a human perspective; and if we could get this we could put things into a more fruitful, creative perspective. So many of our kids who are most militant really believe that whites are superior to them. That's why they keep asserting 'blackness! blackness! blackness!' The thing to do, I would think, would be to recognize that there have been certain advantages. There's no doubt that many of these whites have had better educational opportunities. And it's going to be difficult competing with them *for a while*. But, it seems to me that if you recognize that they've had the advantage and that you are going to have to work harder, once your brain is programmed with the proper amount of information, you're going to catch up. I've seen this happen. But I see some of these kids at universities all clustered together, and they look a little bit pathetic. I want to say to them: 'Look, it just isn't so. It just isn't so! Just drop this and take some chances. You're as good as anybody here.'

"As for those charges of white paternalism, part of this business is a way of relating, which becomes offensive because it's presumptuous. My experience with that kind of conversation came around the left, from the Communist Party. They had their theories straight from wherever they came from, and they interpreted everything. That was one of the problems with Wright: they were always trying to tell Wright that he wasn't following the line. This was so because they thought they had the complexity of his experience down on paper. I guess that's inevitable in this country, and our kids are going to have to learn what their forefathers learned: that there is a certain forbearance, and a certain acceptance of our own maturity, our own human maturity. And in some ways Negroes are much more mature; we damn well should be because we've had a harder time. But we keep getting this mixed up with obsequiousness or with fear, which is the way the *white* man interprets it. When blacks come right along they say,

'You've been brainwashed.' Well, they don't realize that *they've* been *programmed*.

"I remember my mother saying to me in regards to a friend of my family's who kind of went off her rocker. Her father was very, very fond of me, and she began to say that she thought maybe he *was* my father; which just upset me because I was an adolescent. I went to my mother telling her how offended I was, and my mother didn't get angry. She simply said: 'Now, look. You're old enough to know that this woman is kind of crazy. You keep that in your mind.' And that was that.

"Some years ago when I was making certain statements, there were critics who in conversation would say: "Ah, you don't know what you're talking about." But what I couldn't get across a few years ago has become more and more clear to people who are really thinking about it. You see, the one thing that happened in this country after the Hayes-Tilden Compromise was that the whole focus upon the relationship of black people and their culture to the broader culture was sort of shut down. Not much light could come through. Historians wrote histories of the Civil War, and social critics wrote interpretations of American culture and society which did not give us very much of a role. We were pushed to the back of the head, to the underside of the mind, so to speak. And it wasn't until the agitations started in the South and began to spread that they began to look back. Now I don't mean to imply that we were the sole force which made for the re-evaluation of the culture, because there has been revisionism going on across the board. But the agitations made it a little bit more impossible to ignore our presence. They made it a little bit more impossible not to ask the questions: who are they? what are they doing? what have they done? what is their influence? After all, there are millions of them and they're ever present. How have they been affecting us other than in terms of music and dance?

"In 1942 when I was on the *Negro Quarterly* I sent around a lot of letters to critics asking, What is it you would like to see discussed as to the relationship between the Negro cultural background and the larger American culture? Only a few responded. They had never thought about it. But I knew that the relationship was there because if I, in order to make something out of the folklore which I knew, had to go very often to white writers because we didn't write about it very much, I knew that there had to be some reciprocal action on *their* part because they could live with the assumption that we were not important, while *I* never could. And I think that political developments and the sheer pressure of time—the role in the world which the nation achieved after the Second World War—made all these questions come to the fore. So that now when I make a statement which before would have sounded wild, it isn't wild anymore. We've had enough people studying the music, collecting the

folklore; just a simple thing like traveling in the South and seeing black people in our natural habitat—seeing some of the contrasts—has done a lot. There are questions about American society which need to be answered, and if a black critic can answer them, these answers will be accepted. If the American sociologist can take the theories of E. Franklin Frazier and use them partially against us in all good faith, and these theories can find their way into legislative programs, there's no reason why literary interpretations—interpretations of the culture coming from us—can't be just as effective. Because the kids want to know."

Santa Cruz, California
April, 1970

Dear Amelia:

I was very pleased to have met you during my stay in Ames. Now, before the Spring Holidays begin, I wish you would tell me your impressions of Ellison as an artist, as a black man in touch with young black people as a man of ideas. . . .

There are thousands and thousands of books in the rooms of his apartment; and besides the pieces of sculpture, paintings, African vases, self-designed furniture, and other symbols of a highly cultivated sensibility, are deep drawers and file cabinets which, if opened, reveal thick sheaves of notes and manuscripts. Ellison's huge desk, which sits in a study just off the living room, is covered with books, a red electric typewriter, well-thumbed manuscripts, and tape equipment. In conversation he always sits away from it, in the leather-strap chair by the window, looking out on the Hudson and the street below.

He is a very direct and open man, even though there are silent levels of intimidating intelligence and unexpressed feeling beneath much of what he says. And he tends to approach even the most abstract idea from a personal point of view, usually including in any observation some supportive incident drawn from his own experience.

He talks freely of his mother, who died when he was in his early twenties, his relatives in Oklahoma, his professional relationships with other writers and critics, conversations with people on the subway or in the streets of Harlem; a recent chance meeting with Kurt Vonnegut in the streets of Manhattan; his respect for Saul Bellow as an extremely well read novelist. And there is not an unkind, unprofessional, or imperceptive word for anyone, not even his most rabid critics. But he does become irritated if you question too closely his sense of identity as an American writer as opposed to a black writer, and is likely to react when he senses a too containing category being projected onto him. "Let's put it this way, Jim," he says, irritation in his voice. "You see, I *work* out of American literature. In order to write the kind of fiction that I write I would *have* to be in touch

with a broader literary culture than our own particular culture." He pauses, and then says: "This is not to denigrate what we have done, but in all *candor* we haven't begun to do what we can do or what we should have done. I think one reason why we haven't is that we've looked at our relationship to American literature in a rather negative way. That is, we've looked at it in terms of our trying to break into it. Well, damn it"—and his voice rises, and his hand hits the arm of the chair—"that literature is built off our folklore to a large extent!" And then he laughs that deep honest chuckle, and says: "I ain't conceding that to *nobody*!"

Ames, Iowa
April, 1970

Dear James:

As an artist the man is beautiful. I think that is what was so captivating about his book. The symbolism that he uses and the combination of literary mechanics that he employs will probably make his work much more lasting than that of his black contemporaries. *Invisible Man* is a classic, and to say any more or less about it would be an understatement.

As for being in touch with the ideas of young people today, I think that he is quite aware, but he doesn't have the charisma that one would expect after hearing his reputation as a speaker and taking into account the acclaim his book has received. Part of my feeling is due to the disappointment of hearing him explain the figure in *Invisible Man*. So many concerned blacks had read the plight of the Afro-American into this figure with no face and no name. So many people saw the author riding to champion the cause of the black man. Those same people heard him say that the symbol was representative of a universal man. I found that most disheartening.

We are unfortunate at Ames, as well as at many other places across this nation, to have a group of young people who have been introduced to new ideologies and a new rhetoric and are attempting to adopt both when they do not understand either. Therefore, when they see or hear anyone who does not speak in their rhetoric they cannot, do not, and will not try to communicate with him. This was very true of Ellison.

He has a lot to say to a people who will listen to him. Today's youth are angry, and many times this anger closes their ears to a different rationale. Ellison's language and approach, I fear, attach to him the stigma of black bourgeois and conservatism. This figure does not communicate well with the vocal black youth. . . .

Santa Cruz, California
April, 1970

Dear Ralph:

There is a very popular phrase, widely circulated now by militants, to the effect that the present "move-

ment" cannot afford any individuals; that if you "are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem."

For the black writer, I assume this means that he cannot deal analytically with the complexities of black experience in fiction unless he asserts the current ideological thoughts of the group as construed by its "spokesmen." This, of course, is an ancient argument (food, usually, for those abortive black writers' conferences), and I know that your position has always been that the writer, whether or not he is black, must assert his special vision above all other considerations, go it alone, even at the risk of eliciting criticisms from the community and from "friends of the Negro." But do you find that maintaining this position has alienated you and your work from the masses of the black community and has made you a symbol, a point of convenient attack for certain members of the white critical Establishment whose simplistic conceptions of black people and black life are threatened by your constant assertions of the complexities? Have you altered in any way the views you expressed in the essay "The World and the Jug"?¹

ELLISON: "I'm a little tougher than that. In the first place, I suppose I was disciplined for the predicament which I find myself in now—if it is a predicament—by all of my life. I've always had the strange role of being before the public and yet not quite part of the crowd. As a kid, I was always in the plays and programs; as a trumpeter in the school band I, in a couple of years, was student conductor. I played varsity football, I was part of the popular set, and yet I was always a loner. That was temperamental, and it made for certain difficulties. I guess I lived far too much in books, or took books far too seriously, to allow some of my schoolmates to feel comfortable. But my own role was inside and outside. And it continued to be that way. I was never really shy, but I was never one of those individuals who had absolute approval; nor did I want it.

"Now I've studied enough of the lives of writers and other artists to know that it costs you something to function in this field with any sort of individuality. I know that the pressures toward conformity are not just imposed by whites; they are part of the defense mechanism of the black community itself. Years ago, when I was on the Federal Writers' Project and was just beginning to write, there were friends of mine, some of whom were also on the Project, who happened to be at a party. It was reported to me afterwards that my name came up, and they decided, then

¹ In the "The World and the Jug" Ellison defends his right to an individual vision against critic Irving Howe, who, in his essay "Black Boys and Native Sons," assessed the merits of Wright, Baldwin, and Ellison as "black writers." The essay is collected in *Shadow and Act*.

and there, that I would never write anything. Now it isn't just that these people were not in the position to judge—because I can say quite frankly that not too many of them knew too much about writing. But somehow they made the decision that I was never going to produce anything. This friend came and told me about it, and we had a big laugh. But I was hurt, I won't deny that, because they weren't giving me a goddamn chance! And yet already I was publishing in the *New Masses* and the *New Republic* and slowly trying to find where I was going. Later I realized that this activity was a way of protecting them from being too ambitious. What they were saying was that 'he's too damn ambitious.' Well, maybe I was. But I think that we should be more generous.

"I also know this: whether you really have achieved anything or not, in this country we are so under the spell of publicity that if your name appears a little bit too frequently you're going to become a target.

"I responded to Irving Howe in that way because these issues go beyond *me*. They become important for young black writers who are trying to orient themselves. I'm just saying to them that there is something about their experience which other people might tend to overlook because they're outside it. I'm saying that I'm in a better position to see certain things about American literature or American culture precisely because I'm a black man; but I'm not restricted by those frames which have been imposed upon us. I think that one has to keep this constantly in mind; otherwise, somebody else is going to be interpreting your experience for you, and you're going to be repeating it. And they might be in error."

Presently, as part of the increased public and academic interest in literature written by blacks, there is a movement under way to re-evaluate the position of Richard Wright. And, because of the double standard of criticism, Wright's work is not measured against the works of his peers (*Native Son* was published in 1940, along with John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* and Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*), but against the works of James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison. And in order for Wright's legend to rise on the black scale, the esteem of Baldwin and Ellison must be lowered. Consequently, a review in the May 8, 1970, issue of *Life* magazine, called, honestly enough, "Black Fiction: A Second Look," suggested that "Ellison himself, and James Baldwin after him, both helped to create the image of Wright as a novelist too much given to social protest, too preoccupied with one level of black society and too constrained by the limitations of his brutish protagonist really to qualify as a master." The author, a mysterious critic named Clifford Mason, notes that much of the "grandiloquent praise" of Wright's accomplishments by black writers issues from a "strong reaction to the obsequious bleatings of white appeasement that has characterized Ellison's politics." Ellison admits that this sort of thing annoys him.

"But here," he says, "I was just as annoyed by the fact that this man calls himself a teacher and a critic, and he hasn't done his homework. I never wrote a review of *Native Son*, nor did I ever call Bigger Thomas a brute. Nor did I lead the attack on *Native Son*. I was Wright's best man," he says, nostalgia clearly in his voice, his head turned toward the Hudson. "I led to the reconciliation between Wright and his wife. I think my essay on *Black Boy* is a tribute to Wright, and I've praised his achievements in any number of places." Now his tone is severe, his head shifts back to the room. "But somehow this man wanted to set up something. And what he knows about my politics, I don't know. I've been criticized because I was *not* political. Privately," he says, his voice steady but rising, "*my politics are my own!* I'm *not* a spokesman. I'm *not* a politician. And I've very, very carefully tried to avoid pretending to be what I am not. But that kind of thing is cheap. Whatever the quarrel between Wright and Baldwin was, I don't think that it should be generalized into a principle. People meet, people exchange ideas, and hopefully the exchange is creative. Sometimes it isn't; but why kill off someone? I wrote a review of Langston Hughes's *The Big Sea*, and I was very critical of it. I think that it hurt him a little, but it was not a vicious review. It was a considered review, written as well as I could at the time. But I never felt the need to attack Langston Hughes to raise up Ralph Ellison. I could never *be* a Langston Hughes, no matter how good he became or how poor he became as an artist. I can only be myself. So that I don't have to envy other people. It seems to me a waste of time and a discredit to oneself."

McPHERSON: "In the novel *The Outsider*, Richard Wright seems to have attempted a sort of projection of the possibilities which would become available to American black writers as our people gained greater participation in the society. In the novel a white district attorney says to Cross Damon: 'Negroes, as they enter our culture, are going to inherit the problems we have, but with a difference. They are outsiders and they are going to *know* that they have these problems. They are going to be self-conscious; they are going to be gifted with a double vision, for, being Negroes, they are going to be both *inside* and *outside* of our culture at the same time. Every emotional and cultural convulsion that ever shook the heart and soul of Western man will shake them. Negroes will develop unique and specially defined psychological types. They will become psychological men, like the Jews. They will not only be Americans or Negroes; they will be centers of *knowing*, so to speak. The political, social and psychological consequences of this will be enormous.' Considering the quality of the fiction presently being produced by black writers, do you think that Wright's prediction was accurate?"

ELLISON: "This is one of the greatest advantages of being black: you have a perspective which is fairly uncluttered if you will use it. By being in it and outside you can evaluate. Housekeepers, bellhops, domestics, have done this for *years*. You can listen to women talk about what happens in the white family. They're not always malicious in their discussions, but they have a standard, and they can see. And they're wise in certain ways: they're wise in the ways of human folly and aspiration. This isn't limited by color. But in terms of their position in the social hierarchy, they were outside but right in the *bedroom*. So what better position can you have? A *psychiatrist* doesn't have that advantage of observation.

"Wright was right. We have that, and have always had it. American writers have not yet learned to use what has been available to us: that listening post, that point of observation, which puts one in the position of making judgments, of seeing, or of exercising sympathy. And the suspicion of this haunted whites in the South. That's why they're just as obsessed with what the Negroes are doing. That's what's not talked about. But they have as much curiosity about how the maid is faring and what the Negroes do.

"But this is an opportunity to make judgments and to use the imagination. One problem that I've always felt as a writer was the restriction placed on me by my racial status to be in those areas where important decisions are arrived at. And what I find most ironic about the separatist positions taken by black students is that they are removing themselves from those areas where they can observe and even participate in the formation of values on the part of their white fellow students.

"When we study the lives of the great writers by social class, or by function, we find that they were in the position to observe from the very top of the society to the very bottom of the society. Dickens moved among the very top people of England while he was studying the abuses of child labor. Cervantes was in prison most of his life, and when he was not, he moved in the circle of the clericals. Stendhal had that same advantage. I don't know of any European writer who didn't manage to do some of this. And in our own country the Hemingways certainly had access to the top intellectual and artistic circles and, when they wanted it, to political circles. This was true of Faulkner. And right down the line. Well, this isn't just for fun. These are positions of observation; positions where values can be studied in action. And we have to do *more* of that. We have to project the imagination.

"One reason why I tell black kids to read novels is that we've been choked off from knowing how the society operates. And very often American novels, even those we don't think so highly of, do tell us something about the dilemmas of people and institutions, of areas of American life from which we are restricted because of our race. So that one of the main objectives of black writers certainly should be

to *use* that gift in disguise which has been given us through the history of segregation.

"You see, what happens in this country is that many of us come from the South or the Southwest or the Midwest. And we come to New York or we go to the West Coast, and we're sort of processed; we're kind of stylized, blacks and whites alike. Much of what gets into American literature gets there because so much is left out. I think the problems of the writings of a man like Wright Morris come precisely because he has written so extensively about a little-known part of the United States in a very understated way. He's a very good writer, but people don't really know enough about the reality out of which he writes to make them fully appreciate what he's doing. And I think that this happens over and over again and builds a need in the minds of writers, even those who become successful, to have *more* information, to have imaginative projections of the great variety of the country. That's a central problem of American literature. Always has been. Under the great emphasis on the novel of manners what do you get? You get Jewish boys whose parents were peasants very often assuming the values of Boston mandarins. I've always found this ironic, and yet I can't overlook the fact that some of them did this very well. America is a country in which these strange transformations occur, and can be made to occur consciously, even though very often we end up like *Gatsby*: following the wrong green light under the wrong name."

Ellison is still a first-novelist, despite his reputation. And that one novel was published over eighteen years ago. He contributes a steady flow of articles to intellectual journals and periodicals, and scholars and critics are rapidly making a permanent place for him in the archives of American literary criticism. But while students continue to read and his critics continue to write, there is the expectation of his long-awaited second novel. So far he has read from it in universities and on Public Television, published sections of it in intellectual journals, allowed a few close friends to read some of it, and has remained strangely silent about publication of the rest. Inestimable numbers of people, black and white, in and out of universities, friends and enemies, await the publication of the complete novel. Whenever his name is mentioned among a group of writers or literati, the immediate response is: "When is his novel coming out?" One man has heard that he has pulled it back from his publisher again for more revisions; another says that Ellison worries about its being dated; a third man says he has heard that Ellison cannot finish it.

Concerning that novel there are many other stories. Perhaps the best one is that which some friends of the Ellisons supposedly heard from the writer's wife. "She says she hears him in his study at night

turning pages and laughing to himself. He enjoys the book so much that he isn't in a hurry to share it with the public."

Whether or not this is true, Ellison is extremely reluctant, at first, to discuss the book. A fire in his summer home in Plainfield, Massachusetts, destroyed a year's worth of revisions, he says, and he is presently in the process of revising it again. "I want what I do to be good," he says.

"Are you worried about the quality of it?"

"No," he says. "But you want to be sure when you write so slowly, because if it's not good, if it's just passable, they'll be terribly disappointed."

He has enough typed manuscripts to publish three novels, but is worried over how the work will hold up as a total structure. He does not want to publish three separate books, but then he does not want to compromise on anything essential. "If I find that it is better to make it a three-section book, to issue it in three volumes, I would do that as long as I thought that each volume had a compelling interest in itself. But it seems to me that one of the decisions one has to make about long fiction is whether the effect of *reading* it is lengthy. If you don't get the impression that you're reading a long thing, then you've licked the problem of the battle of time."

The setting of the novel, he says, is roughly around 1955. The form of it, he says, chuckling to himself, is in the direction of a "realism extended beyond realism." There are several time schemes operating within it, and the sections already published heavily suggest that it is complexly involved with the Negro Church and its ritual. In fact, three of its major characters, Bliss, Eatmore, and Hickman, are ministers.

On an afternoon, after a martini and before dinner, if the flow of conversation has been relaxing, and if the mood is right, Ellison might read a few sections from the book. It may take him a while to thumb through several huge black-bound manuscripts, perhaps numbering thousands of pages, to find an appropriate section. But when he does begin to read there is the impression, from the way the rhythms rise and fall and blend and flow out of him, that he is proud of every word. He chuckles as he reads, stops to explain certain references, certain connections, certain subtle jokes about the minister whose sermon he is reading. And in those sermons his voice becomes that of a highly sophisticated black minister, merging sharp biblical images with the deep music of his voice, playing with your ears, evoking latent memories of heated Southern churches and foot-stomping and fanning ladies in long white dresses and sweating elders swaying in the front rows. And suddenly the sermons are no longer comic, and there is no writer reading from his work. You see a minister, and you feel the depth of his religion, and you are only one soul in a huge congregation of wandering souls hearing him ask, over and over: "*Oh Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes. DO You Love, Ah DO You Love?*"

Berkeley, California
June, 1970

Dear Ralph:

You once stated in an interview that American Negro culture is expressed in a certain dramaturgy which is generally unrecognized as such because it is still tied to the more folkish Negro churches ("Some Negro Preachers are great showmen"). It is my belief that since the Church plays a major part in his life, the Southern black is closer to his cultural institutions, his evolved values and way of life than his Northern brother. His relationships are far more organic and whole than the fragmented relationships found among blacks in the North. But since the Church as this kind of institution is largely restricted to the South, what other areas are available for Northern black writers to study the values of our people? Also, do you think that a Southern background gives a black writer, who is concerned with the Southern black aspects of American culture, pronounced advantages over his fellow black writer who was raised in the North?

ELLISON: "I would think that people working in the theater would be experimenting with anything and everything which is available in an attempt to forge useful dramatic forms. One way would be to take the theatrical activities of the Nationalist Movement in Irish letters, Sean O'Casey and Yeats, and see what we can learn from them as a way of utilizing the dramatic forms implicit in the black community. We know that we have the Church; we know that the ritual is Episcopalian modified by the Negro idiom. We know that in Lodge ceremonies or other secret and public ceremonies there are rituals which have been put together from many places. It would seem to me that we could abstract from these if we studied them and looked at them as ritual, as theater, and not just as a bunch of Negroes having a good time or burying their dead.

"There are certain forms which have been repeated and proved valid, if only through the fact that they have existed for so many years. That is a place to study. Anywhere you get our people gathered together for ceremonial purposes has something to tell us about drama, about what we could use as drama. For example, I see certain of these fellows getting into the life of bars where people gather. I know that there is a sort of ritual pattern: certain things are discussed at certain times; certain people come at certain times; certain things are not discussed when one group of people is there. A certain atmosphere will prevail after football games or after someone has made a big hit on policy. You have many, many of these patterns which no one has done anything with.

"Now, in terms of capturing the idiom, we are not restricted to the stage. When you're dealing with oral tonalities you need bodies, and you need the stage. But when you start translating this kind of thing into

speech, you do what Joyce did. I think that he has a lot to teach us, especially in *Finnegan's Wake*. It's annoying at first, but when you get into it you begin to see how he plays with rhythms, how he will extrapolate from popular songs and everything else. The problem is that you're not going to put the actual sound on paper; but you can evoke it. Or you can study the verbal play of Negro children, who can do a hell of a lot with words and sounds. So much of this is highly rhythmical precisely because the intellectual content is not too great, and you have models for translating this into prose forms. When I was on the Writers' Project I worked on a sub-project collecting folklore. I went into hundreds of apartments and talked to people about folklore and took some of the stuff down. And very often I was able to get it on paper by using a kind of Hemingway typography, by using the repetitions. I couldn't quite get the tone of the sounds in, but I could get some of the patterns and get an idea of what it was like. One of the things said over and over again by people who've read *Invisible Man* is that they can hear the difference in talk, in the speech patterns between Ras and Tarp. And this is a matter of playing with the rhythms, indicating pronunciation without falling into an attempt at the transcription of dialect.

"As for the possibility of a deeper understanding of cultural values and institutions on the part of Southern blacks, I will just say that it's dangerous to generalize in this area. One man brought up in the North who has done his homework as far as reading is concerned and who has that *respect* for the mysteries of black cultural experiences in the South—to which he is not necessarily superior because he enjoyed a broader social freedom in the North—might well make *more* of that Southern experience than a writer who is so caught up in it that he doesn't achieve objectivity. On the other hand, I believe that a black Southern writer who does know his traditions has some of the advantages which William Faulkner or other white Southern writers have had: the advantage of contact with a long accumulation of history in a given place; an experience which has been projected in other forms of artistic expression, which has traditional values and variants, and which has been refined by being *defined* by generations of people who have told what it seemed to be: *'This is the life of black men here. These are the variations. This type of character turns up over and over again.'* For example, you get so many guys who nickname themselves *Jack the Bear* or *Peter Wheatstraw*.

"What we have in the South is an oral tradition which extends right back into slavery and which has been projected in terms of archetypal characters: John the Slave, John Henry, Stagolee—a whole group of them—and they're real-life versions of local characters. People know them by word of mouth rather than their having been written about. For example, a man like Kingsberry who shot up a whole bunch of Texas Rangers in Oklahoma City when

Jimmy Rushing was a little boy. People still talk about Kingsberry. And fabulous fishermen, fabulous hunters, fabulous bootleggers, fabulous cooks, fabulous headwaiters, fabulous hustling bellhops, fabulous evangelists. I can go south now and mention an evangelist named McDuffy whom I knew when I was about five years old, and there'll be people who know about McDuffy.

"This is one of the advantages of the South. In the stories you get the texture of an experience and the projection of values, and the distillation of a kind of wisdom. And this must never be laughed at or rejected, because this was precisely what Shakespeare was doing when he wrote his historical plays; it is what Aeschylus and others were doing when they wrote their plays, because these things go back to myth. This is one of our great heritages, but we haven't learned how to get the most out of it. And one way of getting the most out of it is to recognize that these figures are universal; they are our versions of universal figures who repeat the broader patterns of human life on this earth. And we can see the human implications of them when we put them side by side with some of these great characters. In some essay I point out that if you put John Henry beside Hercules, they're the same figure given the differences between the cultures out of which they come: they're both men with clubs, they're both heroes capable of fabulous feats of strength, and they're both sacrificial heroes because they die to affirm something about human life."

"Stephen's [Daedalus] problem," he wrote in *Invisible Man*, "like ours, was not actually one of creating the uncreated conscience of his race, but of creating the *uncreated features of his face*." Ellison is fifty-six. His face does not show very much of it, but enough is visible. He has a receding hairline, a broad forehead, and deep curved lines on either side of his nose running down to the corners of his mouth. It is a handsome brown face, from either point of view, and there is a healthy stubbornness, besides all else inside that forehead, which helps him to protect it. The face can be cold, severe, analytical, pensive, even smiling. But it is not going to change.

Berkeley, California
June, 1970

Dear Ralph:

Some of the bravest words ever written by an artist are these: "But there is also an American Negro tradition which teaches one to deflect racial provocation and to master and contain pain. It is a tradition which abhors as obscene any trading on one's own anguish for gain or sympathy; which springs not from a desire to deny the harshness of existence but from a will to deal with it as men at their best have always done. It takes fortitude to be a man and no

less to be an artist. Perhaps it takes even more if the black man would be an artist. If so, there are no exemptions." Considering this pain, and considering what it has done to certain of your fellow black writers, what have you done that they did not do which has helped you to survive as an artist? Have you ever revised your *credo* in the eighteen years since publication of *Invisible Man*? How have you been able to maintain that double discipline as Artist and Negro?

ELLISON: "No, I haven't revised my feelings about those words. Maybe I've gone on to generalize them. I think that at our best we've contained our pain. We didn't like to have white folks seeing us crying. I was in Jackson, Mississippi, recently, and one thing a fellow kept saying was: 'My father had his own home, and he didn't let any *goddamn* white insurance man come *around*.' He was also saying that what was in his home was his own private business, and it was to be kept there.

"I don't think that I'm in the position to discuss the pain of other writers. Individuals deal with it as they can. But I *do* say that sometimes you can get so *uptight* about your *disadvantages* that you ignore your advantages. And sometimes we are encouraged to talk about how bad we've been treated, and this becomes a sort of perverse titillation for white people. It has this negative effect: a man who is a very elegant and eloquent man, a very gifted man, begins to overemphasize his disadvantages as a *black man* and finally sets up a reaction. Someone will say: 'Well, goddamnit, what's he complaining about? This was *good* for him. I'm out here slugging in the rat race, and he's a celebrity. What the hell *is* this?' It happens that way. But you'd better be objective about what you're doing if you want to have some sort of psychic peace.

"I notice that over and over again some of our black writers are treating whites as though they were *omniscient*; requiring a perfection of them which we don't have ourselves and which, in the South, whites have tried to pretend they have. And that's insanity. I want to say: 'Look dammit! Don't you know who that *is*? His father was a small-time groceryman who struggled to send him to school. And he's learned a few things. It didn't transform him into any great humanist or into any great sophisticated intellectual. This is only a *relative* matter. You're dealing with a man who still doesn't know what to do when he goes to the opera or a football game, and who would be completely lost if he had to go to a dice game. So don't overrate him.'

"A writer writes out of his own family background, out of his own immediate community, during his formative period. And he writes out of his own talent and his own individual vision. Now if he doesn't, if he tries to get away from that by bending it to some

ideological line, then he is depriving the group of its uniqueness. What we need is individuals. If the white society has tried to do anything to us, it has tried to keep us from being individuals. There's no reason why the individual can't be a member of the group. And, incidentally, the people who make the greatest cry against individuals are themselves trying to be leaders. You can't miss *this* irony. They're doing all they can to suppress all individuality except their own. This is *nonsense*. This we do not need. We need as many individuals developing their individual talents as possible, *but* dedicating some part of their energies to the experience of the group. And dammit, I've *done* that. I've always written out of a sense of the group experience as filtered through my individual experiences, talent, and vision. And I think this kind of accommodation has to be made. In fact, it's inexcusable. We can be proud of Duke Ellington and Johnny Hodges, we can be proud of any number of people; but we're proud of them not because they were anonymous bumps within the crowd, but because they were themselves.

"I think that now a very articulate group of young writers doesn't quite know what to make of me. I'm standing up there—speaking in terms of metaphor now—like a black militant leader with his bodyguard. I don't have a bodyguard, but there's nothing like that to compel people to see if they can't knock you off. I think that since I have not embraced some of their literary theories, they feel that I am the enemy. My position has always been that ideology is one thing. Show me what you make of it. If you make art out of it, I will praise the art even while I argue with the ideology. And I haven't seen enough of the art. I suspect that I have annoyed a few people by insisting upon the mastery of craft. Craft to me is an aspect of morality. I don't mean that I've mastered it. I think that this irritates some of the writers and makes them think: 'That guy, he thinks he's so good.' Well, that's not what I'm talking about. Everytime I walk into my study or into another room of books down the hall I see the great masters. *They're* the ones I have to measure myself against, not because I want to but because that's what is stuck up there. Those are the standards. *I* didn't create them. They were there. Lord knows it would be much easier if you didn't have to work out of a knowledge of what had gone before.

"These arguments over theory will continue. It bothers me to see this generation repeating so many of the mistakes which were around during the 1930s and 1940s. Sometimes these people can be as aggressive in their attacks on writers as the Communists were.

"Well, so what? I've been a Negro-American—black American if you will—for a hell of a long time. And I know one thing to be true: we haven't changed that much." □

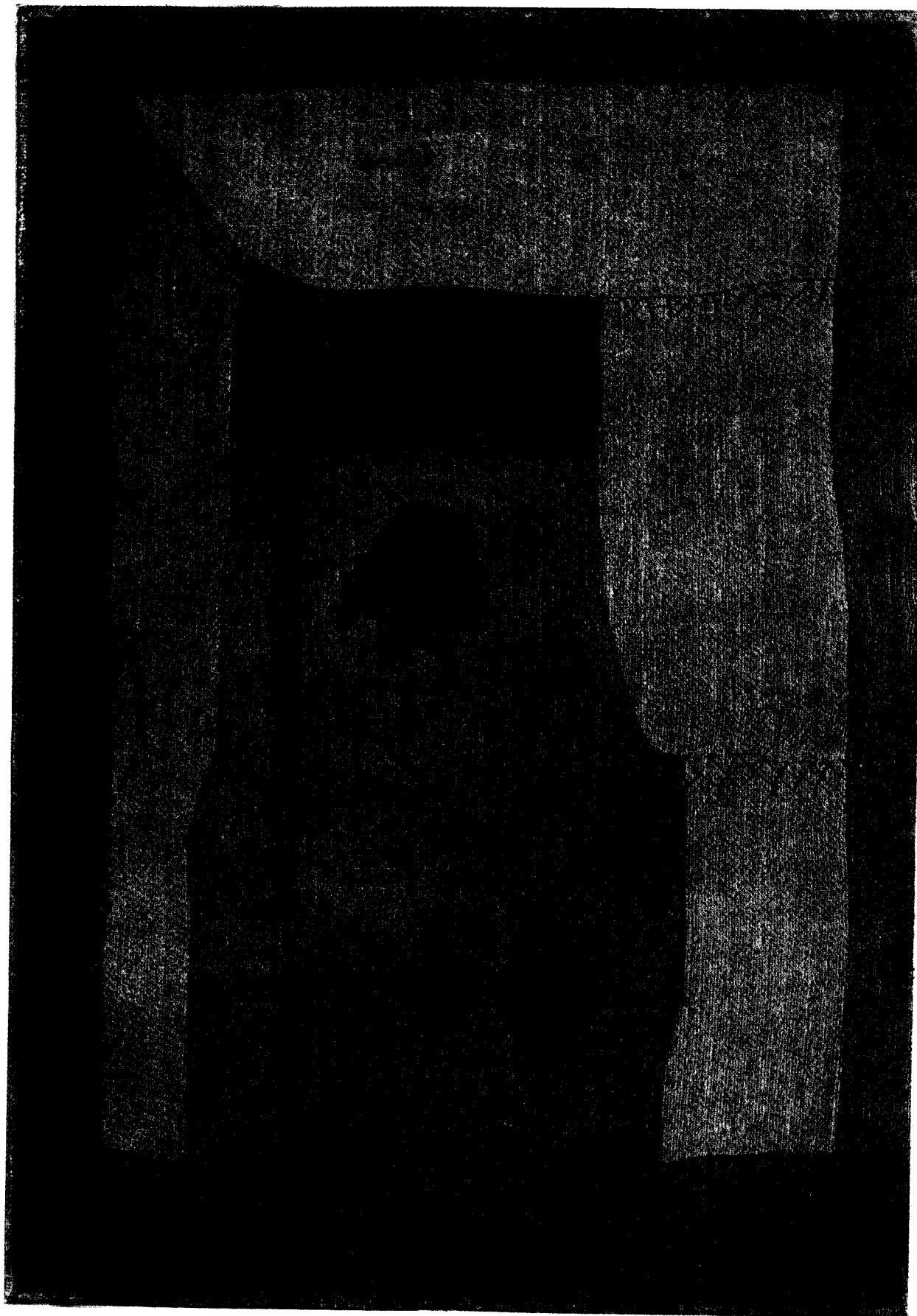


PAINTINGS FROM THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

In 1921, the doors of the graceful Phillips Mansion at 1600 21st Street in Washington's Northwest were opened and the public was invited to enjoy one of the finest privately gathered painting collections in the world. Today the mansion and a modern wing are taken over by the Duncan Phillips collection. For beauty and ambience, there is perhaps no more pleasant or rewarding museum in the world. When Duncan Phillips graduated from Yale in 1908, he had two ambitions: to write and to devote his ample inheritance to collecting works of art. He made friends of many of the artists whose works he bought, employed no go-betweens, chose what he most wanted to own with taste that proved to be impeccable. His wife, Marjorie, herself a painter, became his active partner in assembling the collection and building the Phillips Gallery into the irresistible attraction it has become for art-lovers around the world. In her book *Duncan Phillips and His Collection*, to be published January 18, 1971, by the Atlantic Monthly Press, Mrs. Phillips tells of the building of the collection, and the devotion, insight, and aspiration which have gone into it. Of his father, who died in 1966, and his mother, Laughlin Phillips writes in an introduction: "He was the extraordinarily articulate amateur of art who believed that an artist's unique vision can and should enrich our lives. She was the practicing artist who gave form to his ideal. Their tastes and sensitivities and judgments about art were developed together." In the following pages are selections from the 1200 paintings which make up part of the Phillips Collection.



The Palm by Pierre Bonnard



Arab Song by Paul Klee



Self-Portrait by Paul Cézanne



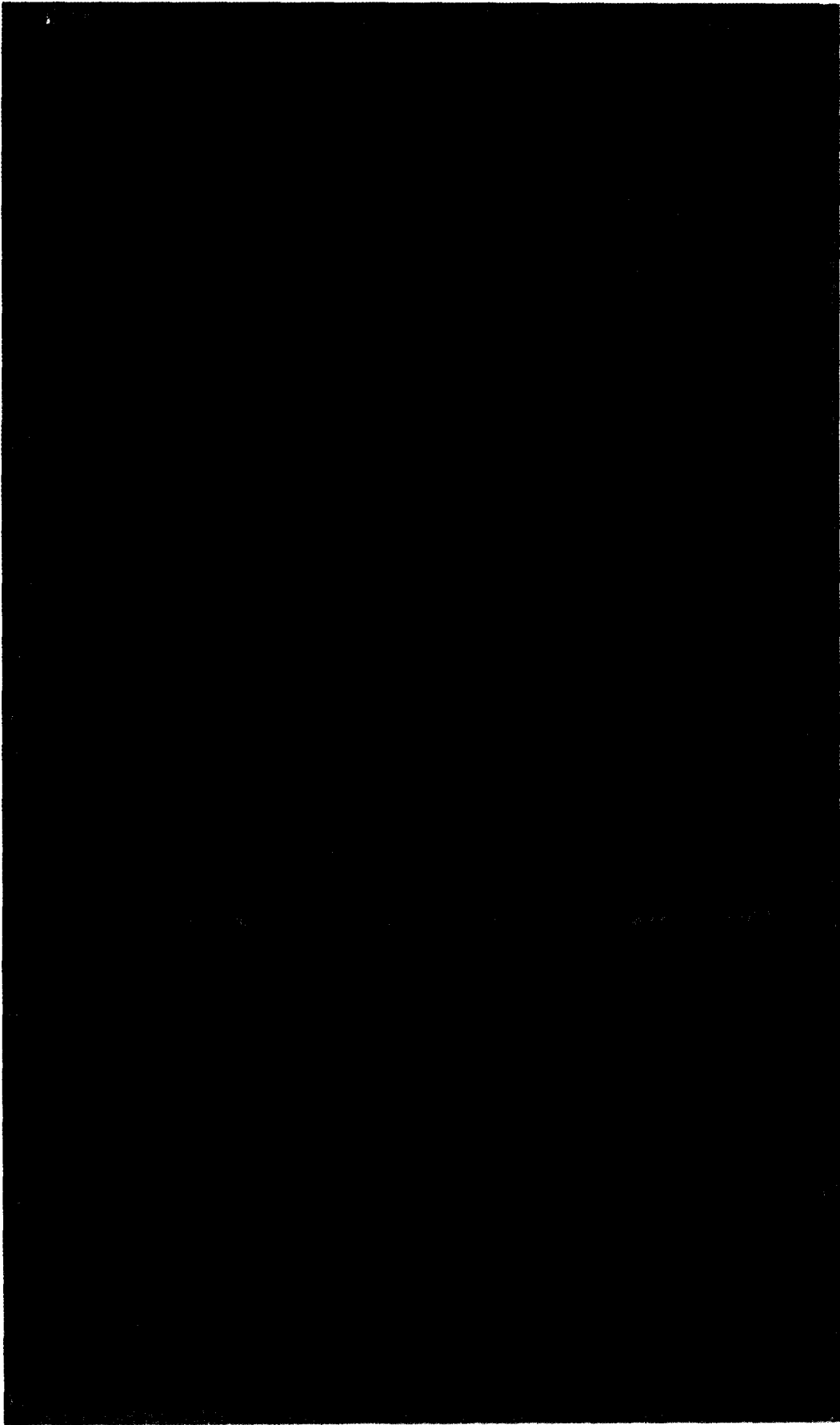
Fugue by Nicolas de Staël



The Egyptian Curtain by Henri Matisse



The Round Table by Georges Braque



Green and Maroon by Mark Rothko

THE POLITICS OF QUACKERY

by Michael Janeway

The only way that democracy can be made bearable is by developing and cherishing a class of men sufficiently honest and disinterested to challenge the prevailing quacks. No such class has ever appeared in strength in the United States. Thus the business of harassing the quacks devolves upon the newspapers. When they fail in their duty, which is usually, we are at the quacks' mercy.

—H. L. Mencken, *Minority Report*

This fall, a book purporting to be “An Extraordinary Examination of the American Electorate” fell like a CARE package for the famished upon the press and professional political community. Its thesis was that voting Americans care more or less exclusively about “the Social Issue”—“a set of public attitudes concerning the more personally frightening aspects of disruptive social change.” It enunciated certain principles which, judging from the reception the book received, were not previously known. “The great majority of the voters in America are unyoung, unpoor, and unblack,” wrote the authors; “they are middle-aged, middle-class, middle-minded.” Further, “the only extreme that is attractive to the large majority of American voters is the extreme center.” Further still, “those politicians who ignore [these] ideas do so at their electoral peril.”

The authors evoked the typical “Middle Voter.” She is “a 47-year-old housewife from the outskirts of Dayton, Ohio, whose husband is a machinist. . . . To know that the lady in Dayton is afraid to walk the streets alone at night, to know that she has a mixed view about blacks and civil rights because before moving to the suburbs she lived in a neighborhood that became all black, to know that her brother-in-law is a policeman, to know that she does not have

the money to move if her new neighborhood deteriorates, to know that she is deeply distressed that her son is going to a community junior college where LSD was found on the campus—to know all this is the beginning of contemporary political wisdom.”

With few exceptions, the press agreed. Here was a book that made everything seem simple at a time of confusion and disorientation. It offered new rules when old ones were crumbling. More accurately, it dusted off the rules of politics circa January, 1968. What a relief! Simple, familiar rules are important to a profession that has to fit things into stories that seem to make sense from day to day; a profession that has had such a rocky time trying to sound as if it knows what's been happening out there for the last three years.

Best of all, this book fitted right in with the discovery of “Middle America” by our press and politicians. The nagging question about the Middle America business is whether the people who like to talk about it can think of anything to do *but* talk about it. Talking, of course, is what men of the press and political professions do best. The nice thing for them about this book, *The Real Majority*,* by Richard M. Scammon and Ben J. Wattenberg, is that it makes talking about Middle America and its problems actually sound like doing something about them. And it does so in catchy language that blends the style of handbook authoritativeness with that of hortatory urgency.

The Real Majority has been received as if it were a diagnosis of, and remedy for, what ails us. It is more like a manual showing how to rub the angry belly of Middle America to make it feel better. It bears the same relation to politics as quackery does

* Coward-McCann, \$7.95.

to medicine. Your average quack knows a certain amount of medicine. The question is whether his treatment involves much more than bedside manner. So it is here. Power, the authors explain, comes from positive thinking about the monster that the old "backlash" has grown into: "That Wallace and Goldwater first sounded forth the law-and-order theme has by now become irrelevant." So much for unpleasant associations. "That 'law and order' is now clearly seen as a legitimate demand of the American people is very relevant." The war in Vietnam, the collapse of reform in America, our government's apparent inability to do much more than inch its way out of the war abroad and fulminate about violence and protest on the home front—the authors counsel that none of this is important politically except insofar as it relates to the "social turbulence that is presently perceived by American voters." Thus, change and an understanding of it are less important objectively than adjusting our politics to people's fear of change.

“Wickedly intelligent analysis,” said John Chancellor in *Book World*. “A canny inventory of the nation’s political assumptions and vocabulary,” said *Time*. “Seldom has one book had so instant an impact on political affairs,” wrote Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, offering as an example the decision by Democratic National Committee pharisees who had “pondered” “advance copies” of *The Real Majority* for a month to expel the village atheist, J. Kenneth Galbraith, from the party’s Democratic Policy Council. The *New Republic* presented prepublication excerpts from it. The *National Review* said the authors “know where the votes are, and what issues are really up.” The *New Yorker* and the *Saturday Review* praised it. The book began to sell: 20,000 copies in its first month. The *New York Times* called it “this season’s most talked-about political book” in a front-page story that suggested that President Nixon agreed with it, as evidenced by his courtship of labor leaders. Later, a *Times* news story entitled “Agnew’s Political Role” reported that *The Real Majority* was influencing the Vice President’s fall campaign rhetoric: “Among the political advisers accompanying the Vice President [on tour], the phrase ‘Scammon and Wattenberg’ is very much in use.” The White House ordered fifteen copies.

The authors’ intended audience, though, was less Nixon or Agnew than the Democratic Party. They are Democrats of the center themselves. Scammon was director of the U.S. Census Bureau under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, and an informal adviser to the Johnson White House staff. Wattenberg served on Johnson’s White House staff, and mentions in the book that he “managed some moonlighting work for Vice President Humphrey during the 1968 campaign.” They implore both major parties to “go to the center,” but feel the Democrats need the

advice more than the Republicans: “The Republican right is not nearly as powerful in its milieu as is the Lemming Left* within the Democratic Party.”

Since 1968, the caretakers of the Democratic Party have found it difficult to respond to the galloping consensus that overtook them at that time: to wit, that the war was a mess, that Johnson was responsible for the mess, and that Humphrey made it worse by trying to pretend it wasn’t there. Scammon and Wattenberg now offer a little help for their friends. They don’t deny that Johnson was in a mess. They do argue that Humphrey, though he appeared “wishy-washy” in 1968, knew more about how to clean it up than did the McCarthy-Kennedy followings then and now. Humphrey followed the “tough” line in his Minnesota campaign this fall, his statements reflecting the gospel according to Scammon and Wattenberg. (The latter formally joined his staff during the summer.) “Liberals in this country have never been anti-workingman, never, never,” Humphrey said. They had been willing over the years to campaign for unpopular causes; now “they must show the courage to take a popular position. . . . I do not intend to let the issue of order in our society . . . due process in our society be usurped by right-wingers.”

Humphrey, of course, is not the only one. Adlai Stevenson III and Senators Joseph Tydings and Edward Kennedy were notable among liberal Democrats who made gestures to the right this fall. “Democrats Shift to Right On Law and Order Issue,” headlined the *New York Times*, stating that the origins of the shift were in the marriage of minds among Scammon, Wattenberg, Humphrey, and the men of the Democratic National Committee. Gleeful for once, Joseph Alsop wrote, “The liberal Democratic scramble to the center is so hasty, even so undignified, that it is extremely comic. But it is a national phenomenon. . . . One may guess that its first impetus came from the horrifying Gallup Poll, showing that a substantial majority actively approved the Kent State shootings. One can be sure, too, that one factor that has helped mightily to turn the scramble into a stampede is an admirable book, *The Real Majority*, by Richard Scammon and Ben J. Wattenberg.”

In a cover story naming “The Middle Americans” as its “Man and Woman of the Year” last January, *Time* stated: “Although a hard figure is not possible, the total of Middle Americans probably approaches 100 million, or half of the U.S. population.” It’s easy to throw around characterizations when the numbers get so big, and you can be arbitrary, too. Depending on your purpose, you can make Middle America seem now Silent and Forgotten

* They are given to phrases like “anti-establishment hyper-liberals,” and one from yesteryear, “Vietniks.”

(Richard Nixon); now quite clearly audible: "Asked to define 'law and order,' an investment adviser in King of Prussia, Pa., said 'Get the niggers. Nothing else.'" (*Newsweek*, "The Troubled American—A Special Report on the White Majority," October 6, 1969.)

The Real Majority is persuasive in showing that behind those stereotypes are millions of Americans, probably including you and me, who are concerned about the spread of violence in the land to the point of deep fear, and who have felt some degree of despair about the disintegration of American politics in recent years. The authors do, of course, keep coming back to their own stereotypes, such as the Dayton lady. But they are plain-spoken and realistic about the universality of fear in America. In this respect it is hard to quarrel with a statement in defense of the book made by Meg Greenfield of the *Washington Post*, who reviewed it for that paper. Miss Greenfield was critical of liberals who think the book invites racist demagoguery: "It is certainly not a call to the abandonment (as has been charged) of anything especially worth saving," she wrote. She quotes the authors: "'Acknowledging that voters are fearful of riots and disorders is not selling out to anything but the truth,' they contend. I confess I am at a loss to know what much of the fuss is about since it seems to me the price is right."

But fuss there is. It has to do with the possibility that "going to the center" means abandoning civil liberties and a politics of reason to the merciless furies of the violent left and the reactionary right. The authors, in effect, urge the Democrats to echo Agnew. But if one starts, how does one know when to stop? For now, the echo chamber is administered and controlled by the President and Vice President, whose interest and pleasure it is to exploit the Democrats' identity crisis to the point of breakdown.

Scammon and Wattenberg themselves speak as if the Democrats had no choice but to go right. After all, that's what the polls say. They are candid about their reliance on published opinion polls: "These surveys are of immense value," they write, offering no word of caution about how to read the results, except to note at one point that "the field of attitudinal polling is very much in its infancy." Here is one of the many kinds of polls the authors offer: a Gallup poll published in June, 1969.

Question: "In general, would you like to see college administrations take a stronger stand on student disorders, or not?"

Yes	No	No Opinion
94%	3%	3%

This is all very scientific. Someone goes out and asks about 1500 (rarely more than 1800) people whether they oppose violence, and rather a large majority says yes, it does. The authors do not dis-

tinguish between this "have you stopped beating your wife?" sort of poll and the more sophisticated studies. In the process they undermine the credibility of the latter. To support the argument that it was "fed-up" law-and-order sentiment rather than anti-war sentiment that brought down Lyndon Johnson in the spring of 1968, the authors leave off Gallup and Harris and turn to the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan, which publishes its findings not in the *Daily News* but in the *American Political Science Review*. Scammon and Wattenberg write that these findings "show that three out of five of the McCarthy supporters in New Hampshire believed that the Johnson Administration was wrong on Vietnam because it was not hawkish enough, not because it was *too* hawkish." (Their italics.)

The *American Political Science Review* article does, in fact, suggest that interpretation; it also concludes: "Quite apart from the nature of the leadership elected in 1968, it is obvious to any 'rational' politician hoping to maximize votes in 1970 or 1972 that there are several times more votes to be gained by leaning toward Wallace than by leaning toward McCarthy."

What the Survey Research Center scholars, Scammon and Wattenberg, and the newspaper and political figures who are buying their wares all appear to accept without question is that American politics is bordered on all sides by whatever Yes, No, or Undecided answers to complicated questions pollsters can elicit. The pollsters are, after all, questioning people who are in all likelihood hard put to articulate subtle and conflicting feelings about what troubles them most. How can one produce data to prove the doubtful relevance of polls which show that most people don't like crime, or are uncomfortable about the horrors related to the war, such as My Lai and Kent State? Common sense tells us something about a poll with findings such as this one by Louis Harris, published in *Time* on January 12, 1970: "Surprisingly, Americans are not particularly disturbed by the disclosure that U.S. troops apparently massacred several hundred South Vietnamese civilians at My Lai. By a substantial 65% to 22%, the public shrugs off My Lai, reasoning that 'incidents such as this are bound to happen in a war.'" (The shrugs and the "reasoning" courtesy of Louis Harris.)

What is really going on in such an instance? Surely people resist accepting what it is painful for them to accept; that goes for intellectuals as well as for the middle-minded real majority. People who told the Survey Research Center that they supported Eugene McCarthy and wanted to nuke Hanoi (or more typically, one presumes, responded to questions about their views on the war by saying that they wanted to "win or get out" and that it is better to "win" than to "get out") were people who were trying to deal with contradictions in what they believed, with assaults upon their convictions, with

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shattered illusions. The Ruskian logic of collective security and peacekeeping as applied to Vietnam, the nation's faith in its unlimited capacities; these were falling apart in 1968. The important point is not that troubled people who turned to new leadership failed to explain to "scientific" pollsters coherently and logically why they did so. The important point is that, regardless of what they said, those people were ready to follow new leadership. That is how change occurs. Candidates daring to speak the unspeakable, as McCarthy and Kennedy did in 1968, build followings of people who in turn find some way to vote themselves into the future, though they still speak in the language of the past. "Hawks" and "racists" voted for Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy. Looking for explanations of complexities like those in a poll is like looking for the verdicts of history in a lie detector.

Of course, if you insist on forcing the question because you must have the answer—do you think American troops massacred Vietnamese at My Lai? Are you a hawk or a dove? Who were you for in the streets of Chicago, the kids or the cops? Would you like to see college administrations take a stronger stand on student disorders, or not?—you will get predictable answers which reflect people's horror of disorder at home, embarrassment abroad, and mayhem all about.

A politics ruled by the pollsters is a politics in which the blind lead the blind. *The Real Majority* argues that the voters are *not* blind, but wide awake: awake with fear, and the book frankly counsels a politics keyed to that fear. It describes the "change in the perceptions that white Americans have of black Americans," from the "college-educated, articulate, neat" black civil rights activist of a decade ago, integrating Southern lunch counters to the young black of the mid-60s city riots, "grinning . . . excited as at a carnival" and "carrying a television set," to the rifle-carrying blacks who occupied buildings at Cornell in 1969. The authors write, "It would be wrong to say that these three scenes represent the *facts* of the recent racial situation in America, but they do represent the *perceptions* that many Americans had and have. . . ." (My italics.)

Perceptions not based in fact might be called misconceptions. Certainly, there is nothing new about politics dealing in popular misconceptions, nor about politics playing to fear. "Crime frightens," write the authors. "Young people, when they invade the dean's office, or destroy themselves with drugs, or destroy a corporate office with a bomb, frighten. Pornography, nudity, promiscuity are perceived to tear away the underpinnings of a moral code, and this, too, is frightening. Dissent that involves street riots frightens. . . . When voters are afraid, they will vote their fears."

Too true. True also that "the Social Issue," or

whatever you want to call it, is "honestly and legitimately troubling tens of millions of Americans." The question is, what is to be done in such a situation? Love it or leave it?

The authors try hard to justify Meg Greenfield's claim that they do not call for the "abandonment of anything worth saving." That is, they argue that liberals no less than conservatives can and should oppose violent disruption and crime. And they take pains to suggest that liberals can be for law and order without appeasing racism and reaction, or compromising libertarian principle. They write, "That being 'liberal' should equate with being soft on mugging or soft on disruption is absurd. In point of fact, being liberal *demands* a firm stand on freedom from fear in society." And elsewhere, "Democrats—national Democrats vying for public office, that is—cannot, should not, and will not conduct a campaign with even an undertone of racism. . . . But . . . Democrats must campaign against crime, against student disruption, against violent black militancy, against riots—and mean it." The authors provide appropriate scripts:

"Do *not* say, 'Well, I don't agree with the Students for a Democratic Society when they invade a college president's office, but I can understand their deep sense of frustration.'"

"Do say: 'When students break laws they will be treated as lawbreakers.'"

"Do *not* say, 'Crime is a complicated sociological phenomenon and we'll never be able to solve the problem until we get at the root causes of poverty and racism.'"

"Do say, 'I am going to make our neighborhoods safe again for decent citizens of every color. I am also in favor of job training, eradication of poverty, etc., etc.'" (Their italics.)

Something gets a little lost in the shuffling around of these straw men. What was it, freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances? The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures? The authors don't say that liberals should run out on the Bill of Rights; just stop sounding like . . . Bill-of-Rights liberals. Enlightenment about the causes and treatments of social ills? Oh, well, you can get that in there with the "etc., etc.'s," after the part where you stomp the Panthers, the Weathermen, and the Vietniks. Franklin Roosevelt began his Administration with the words that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. We are told here that to win, we must fear precisely fear. Adlai Stevenson promised to talk sense to the American people. Here we are told that "the Social Issue" is undiscussable except in terms of generality and obfuscation. Lyndon Johnson vowed that "we shall overcome" racism. Scammon and Wattenberg suggest that frightened and divided Americans, black and white, find calm and unity in the rhetoric of law

and order. (*The Real Majority* does not discuss the substance of "the Social Issue," only "perceptions" of it, and its rhetoric.)

Polls of people's fears, and rhetoric built on those findings, can't get us out of the traps we are in. Interpretations based on their data, as this book is, are not "the beginning of contemporary political wisdom." They are the politics of getting elected in the age of Agnew and Gallup and the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan: a time of quackery. This is Teddy Roosevelt's politics of the "bully pulpit" reduced to politics at the bar in the movie *Joe*. ("Forty-two percent of all liberals are queer," says Joe, citing a "poll.")

A politics that has lost or been robbed of its own bearings, and gears itself to the results of opinion polls for lack of any inner vision of its own lacks the ability to see how people's minds can be changed on the basis of able leadership. Scammon and Wattenberg don't really "trust the people," as they righteously claim. They distrust people's ability to find their way past fear and misconception.

Reading this book, one imagines a book written by influential political insiders in the winter of 1964-1965, analyzing American public opinion about our Vietnam policy. It is not hard to suppose what such a book would have said, on the basis of election results and opinion polls. To begin with, Americans don't like to be pushed around by Communists, big or small. No matter whether "Communist aggression" in South Vietnam is "perceived" to be directed by big Communists (Russia or China) or small ones (Ho Chi Minh); most Americans credit the threatening existence of an international Communist conspiracy. And most "unyoung"

voting Americans remember Korea and the loss of China. While they don't want war, they do want to be "tough" with the Communists. The book might have warned enlightened Democrats to take a "tough" stand against the Communists, lest they invite demagogic attack of the sort that befell Harry Truman and Dean Acheson during the Joe McCarthy period. Those in power would have been advised to find a real majority at the center, eschewing the extremes—Wayne Morse to the left, Barry Goldwater to the right. The book would not have spoken much about the situation in South Vietnam itself, or about the possible dangers of American intervention there, save for the obvious "unthinkable" danger: precipitation of a nuclear war with Russia or China. It would have suggested, finally, that a policy of moderately "tough" "peacekeeping" was fully in the tradition of enlightened Democratic Presidents, from Wilson through Roosevelt and Truman to Kennedy.

Lyndon Johnson, author of a definitive statement on his own motivations for following just such a policy—"I am not going to lose Vietnam. I am not going to be the President who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went"—didn't do too well with the people whose views he felt he was trusting. Out of the debacle of his calculations about the relationship between American public opinion and the threat to international "law and order" posed by Ho Chi Minh comes the situation in which we now live. For Richard Scammon and Ben Wattenberg, and for many who accept what they say, that's all in the realm of complicated facts, as opposed to the all-important realm of shadows on the wall, and of "perceptions" of those shadows. □

* Tom Wicker, *JFK and LBJ: The Influence of Personality Upon Politics*.

MELT-OUT

Politics, you great glacier,
you have been going on for 10,000 years,
yet perhaps there is five feet of movement
in a hundred months.
Julius Caesar fell down a crack in 40 B.C.
His body has just been sighted
emerging at the bottom of the pass,
frozen in a democratic attitude—
pebbles in his mouth.

Now, Martin Luther King
steps in a crevice at the top of the pass.
Into what sort of world
is he going to come melting out, 2000 years from now?
Will 2000 years be enough
to freeze him naturally
in a nonviolent smile?

by Andrew Glaze

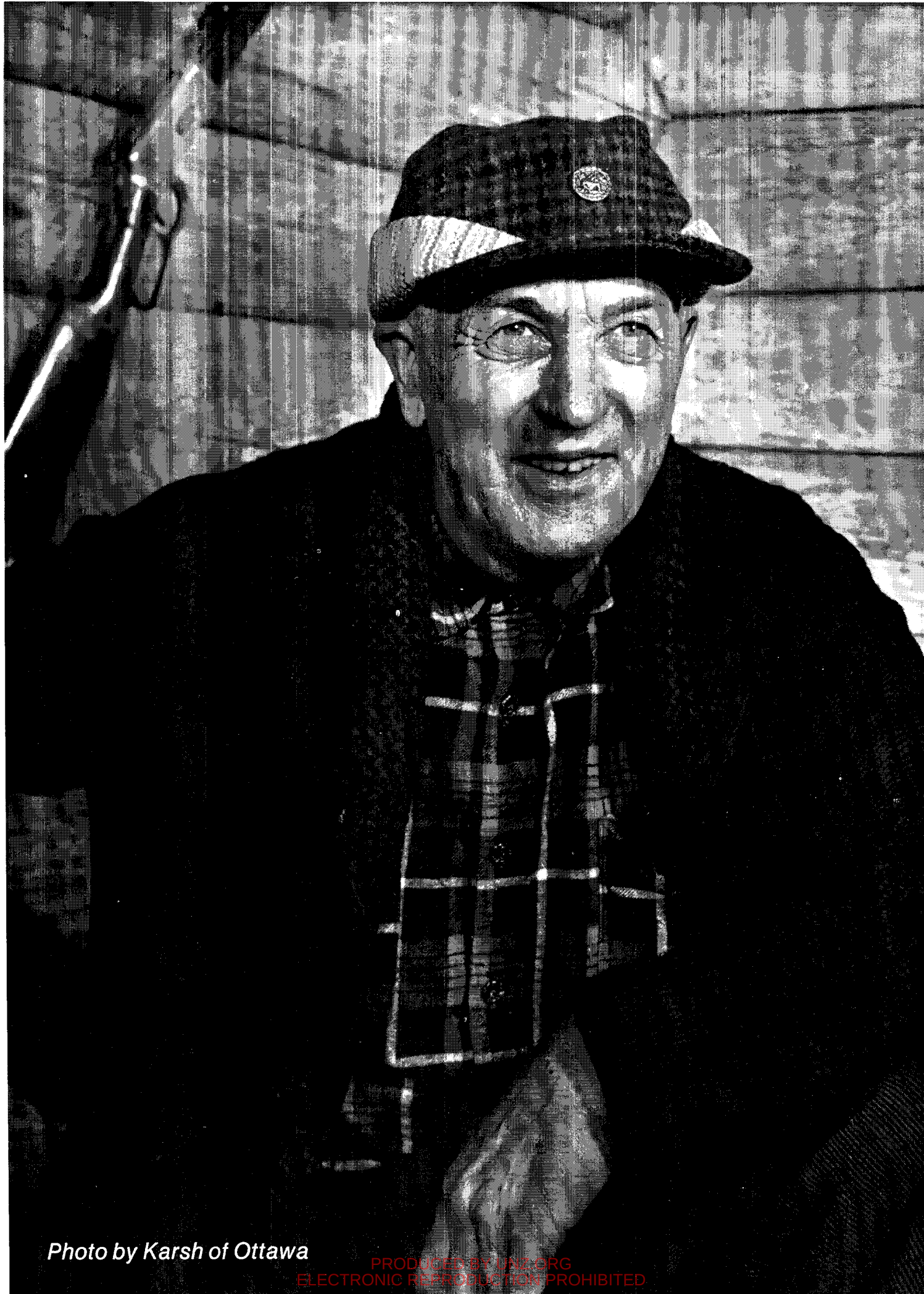
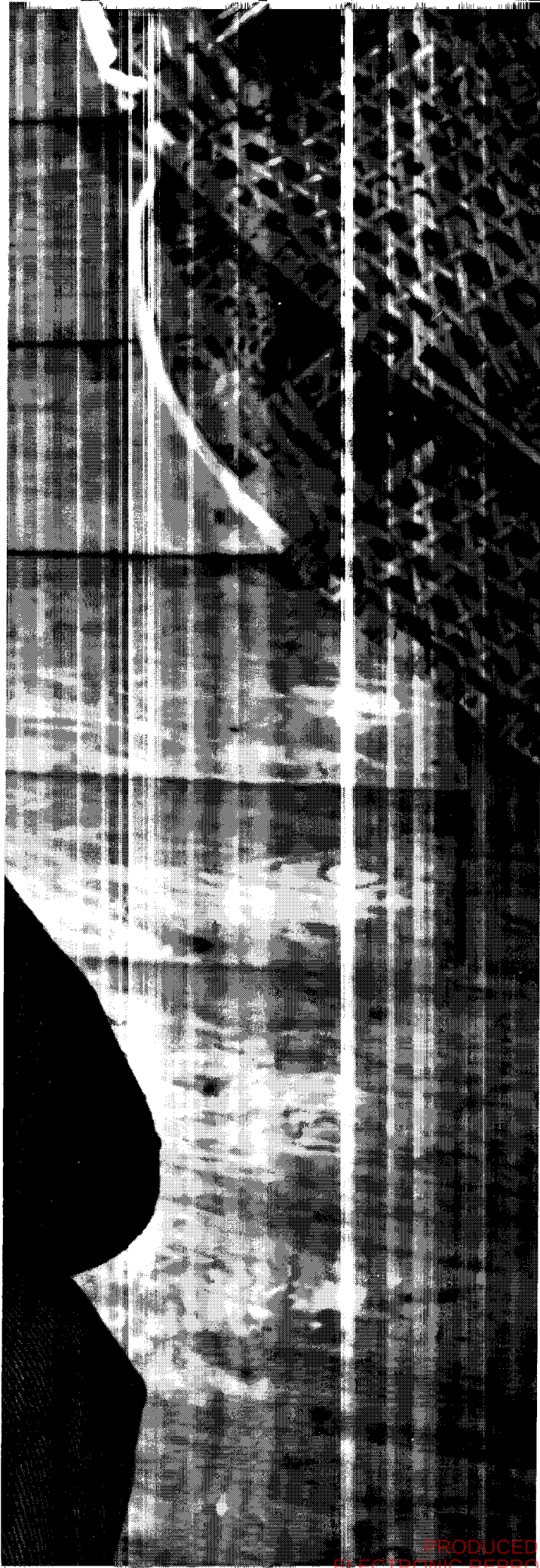


Photo by Karsh of Ottawa

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From the forests of the Quetico
Jock Richardson carved his destiny.
With double-bitted axe he built solid
log cabins; by snowshoe, canoe
and dogsled took the wilderness in
his stride, in a land little changed
since history began.
Northern Ontario. Around Saganaga
and Northern Light Lakes, Indians
still trade furs. Beavers build their
lodges. Moose call. And small waves
murmur against virginal beaches.
Upriver, on this old voyageur route
to the west, rusted flintlocks and
18th century copper kettles lie in still
pools below the white-water rapids.
This is Northern Ontario, the conti-
nent's oldest, richest storehouse of
minerals—gold and silver; uranium;
nickel, copper, iron and lead; all
buried deep in the great Canadian
Shield. It's a place for a *different*
vacation experience, amid spectacu-
lar, unfolding panoramas whose
inspiration enters even its cities.
The unique satisfactions of a
Great Ontario Adventure Vacation,
such as few of your friends have
ever enjoyed, will be described for
you when you write:
Jock Richardson, c/o Department
of Tourism & Information,
Parliament Buildings, Toronto.

ONTARIO



Canada

Friendly, Familiar, Foreign & Near

ON THE DESERT

A story by Patricia Zelter

Earl C Bennet had integrity. He knew his luck - would change one day; it had to on account of the Law of Averages; therefore, compromises weren't necessary. But even if he hadn't believed in the Law of Averages, he wouldn't have given in. That was the kind of man he was.

Earl C was forty-nine years old. The "C" in his name didn't stand for anything, but was just part of his Christian name given to him by his mother and daddy. He was six feet tall, almost, if he stood up straight. But for a long time now he had slumped. The slump had solidified into a little hump between his skinny shoulder blades; Earl C accepted the hump as matter-of-factly as folks accept a proper part of their body. His face was long and bony; his skin and hair were the color of the Mojave in late summer. He wore khaki pants and a white T-shirt. The only color to him was his eyes, which were the translucent blue of the bottles he collected out on the desert and kept on the windowsill, and which had a neutral expression as if, like the bottles, they had been put there just for decoration.

Earl C lived in his place of business, which was called Earl's Place. It was a three-room wooden shack with a tin roof, right next to the Highway, seventy-six miles from Vegas and twenty miles from "The Heart of America's Favorite Recreation Land."

The front room was the Café, where he served sandwiches and soft drinks and sold thunder rocks and other souvenirs; next to the Café was the storage room, where he kept his freezer and supplies. The other small room, beneath the sloping tin roof, was his bedroom. He used the outdoor public Gents for his toilet.

Five years ago the Highway had been busy, but now, owing to the new Freeway, it had turned into a frontage road, and only local traffic went by. Darlene, Earl C's wife for twenty years, had seen the Freeway coming and had tried to persuade Earl C to sell the Place and buy a motor court on the Freeway. Earl C had refused.

It wasn't because he didn't think Darlene was right; she was usually right about things like that. It was just that he didn't intend to be pushed around by Big Shots in Government. He had voted against the Big Shots all his life. His favorite candidates for President of the United States had been William Lemke, Roger Babson, and Claude A. Watson.

"You slay me, Earl C," Darlene had said, her soft, fat body shaking with silent laughter.

Earl C thought he remembered she had been pretty once. But, imperceptibly, throughout the years, she had put on flesh; the flesh had smoothed out her features and other distinguishing parts of her body, so that it sometimes seemed every part of her looked the same.

"You really slay me," she wheezed helplessly, wiping tears of amusement out of her little piggy eyes.

Then she had took off. With the money she had inherited from her first husband and had hoarded in the bank all the years of their marriage, she had bought the Cactus Motor Court. The Cactus Court had Beautyrest mattresses, air conditioning, wall-to-wall carpets, and a plaster burro out in front. Darlene had her own little unit, where folks registered. She had equipped it cozily, with a new sofa and two overstuffed chairs, plastic potted shrubs that looked real, and a color TV. During the season, her No Vacancy sign was on most of the time.

She had also got herself a divorce for what she called "business reasons." But this didn't stop her from dropping in every Saturday night during off season to play casino and heckle Earl C about his lack of business sense.

"How's your smelly old zoo?" she would say, as she deftly shuffled the cards.

"Flourishing," said Earl C.

"That zoo just costs you time and money. You ought to go out there with your deer rifle and shoot them all."

"I like my zoo," said Earl C firmly.

"How many thunder eggs you sold this month?"



"Didn't keep track."

"You ought to get rid of this place and come over to the Cactus, Earl C. I'd put you up in the trailer. I could use somebody to do the night shift and work as handyman. You never were much good fixing things, but at least you don't drink. I fired that drunken Mexican last week."

"I like it here," said Earl C.

When Darlene was amused, which was most of the time, her eyes screwed up so tight they vanished inside the folds of her flesh. They did that now. "There's no fool like an old fool, Earl C," she said. "You ain't going nowhere. I was just out at your Ladies Rest Room. It's a filthy mess."

"I got a new idea," Earl C said slowly. "I got it in

a place in Las Vegas." He showed her a verse he had copied down on the back of an envelope. "I was thinking of putting this up in the rest rooms."

Darlene read it.

Let no one say to your shame,
There was cleanliness here 'til you came.

Darlene rocked with soundless laughter. "You slay me, Earl C," she said.

Since business was slow, Earl C spent a lot of time sitting on his tiny front porch, next to the frontage road. On the other side of the road the desert stretched out until it reached the row of rocky hills in the distance. In the daytime, the hills were lavender; at night, black, craggy silhouettes. Somewhere up there, it was said, was a hidden ura-

nium mine. In his younger days, Earl C used to go into these hills with a horse and search around in the dry gullies between the barren cliffs. He had not discovered the mine, but he had brought back many bleached bones of animals—skulls, pelvises, rib cages, and femurs of cows, horses, and coyotes. He arranged these bones artistically out in front of his place and planted cacti in and among them for a pretty effect. But he always examined them carefully first. He had heard that dinosaurs, in all sizes, from that of a chicken to eighty-foot-long giants, had once roamed these parts; it was necessary to keep your eyes open; you never could tell when you might come upon a find. He also picked up interesting specimens of rocks and minerals, which he polished and labeled and placed on a bench beneath the bottle window.

Now he had arthritis, and horseback riding shook up his spine. But he liked to stare across the road to the mysterious hills. "I'm not getting any younger," he would say to himself. "I'm not getting any richer, either. But someday, something will happen. It's got to, on account of the Law of Averages."

Out in back of his place, Earl C kept his zoo. He had had, from time to time, a horned toad, two rattlers, a gila monster, a deodorized spotted skunk, a sidewinder, a ring-tailed cat, a kangaroo rat, an iguana, a prairie dog, and two alligators (not indigenous) which he had ordered, against Darlene's wishes, from a shop in Florida. Most of the zoo had now passed away. The Mexican family down the road had stolen and eaten the iguana; Earl C could never prove this, but he knew it in his bones. The gila monster had caught a chill during the rainy season, and passed, too; it was his favorite, and he had taken it to Kingman and had it stuffed, and then returned it to its cage. But folks complained he had advertised a *Live Zoo*, and they weren't getting their fifty cents' worth, so he put the gila monster on the back of the counter, next to the live Black Widow in a mason jar. The Zoo now consisted of one rattler, one sidewinder, the kangaroo rat, which never came out of its nest in the daytime, and the ring-tailed cat, which was mangy and turning mean.

Earl C had advertised his Place for ten miles in each direction with signs he had painted himself, and nailed to telephone poles. Each sign pointed out a different attraction.

10 miles to Earl's—Cool Drinks

7 miles to Earl's—Eats

5 miles to Earl's—Live Family Zoo

2 miles to Earl's—Clean Rest Rooms

When you got to Earl's Place there were many other signs, including a big one he had added after the Freeway went in. It said, "If you can't Stop, Wave."

Recently, Earl C had had bad luck about the signs. A young man with a crew cut and wearing a jacket and tie, who was from the County Planning Department, had stopped by and told Earl C the signs had to go; they didn't comply, were his words, with the county's new sign ordinance. Earl C felt

gravely put upon by this government man, but what could he do? Nothing! That was the way it was with those Big Shots. They made laws that suited only them. One day, about a month later, the signs vanished.

"I see your signs are gone," said Darlene, on the following Saturday night. She kept up with things; nothing escaped her notice.

Earl C explained the situation to her.

"You're a dope, Earl C," Darlene said. "That county man just wanted his palms greased, that's all."

Earl C would never offer a bribe, on account of his integrity. Just the same he was curious about how you went about it. He asked Darlene how much money the county man would have expected. Darlene's fat body quivered and quaked with amusement. He asked her how you gave it to him; did you just hand it straight out, mail it in a letter, or leave it lying on top of the counter for him to pick up?

"There ain't no rules," she chortled. "You just have to have a business head."

There was one thing Darlene never could get through *her* head, business-like though it was, and that was Earl C's conviction, based on scientific evidence, that things would change for the better. A taciturn man, he had a mind filled with images he could not express. They took the form of flickering, incandescent shapes, much resembling the neon splendor of Las Vegas, where he occasionally went to play keno.

El Dorado

Golden Nugget

Four Queens

The Mint

"Twenty-Four Hour Excitement" was what they promised, and Twenty-Four Hour Excitement was what he dreamed about. One day, he knew, it would come about.

Earl C could recall the exact moment when it did. It was ten-twenty-two A.M., November 15, 1967, at the Buy-N-Save Market in Kingman, where he went once a week to buy supplies. Darlene dropped in that evening, and right away she sensed the new look about him. It was the Twenty-Four Hour Excitement look, which, though he tried, he could not suppress.

"How's business?" she said, as they sat at one of the tables in the Café, where they played cards. Her voice wasn't smug this time; it was sharp and suspicious, and her eyes remained wide open.

"Middling," said Earl C.

"How's that ornery bobcat?" she went on, fishing.

"Ring-tailed. Same as ever."

Still eyeing him, cannily, she said, "Gin rummy or casino?"

"Don't know as I have time for either. I got to think."

"Think?" she said scornfully, but he detected an

anxiety in her voice. "When did you ever think last, Earl C?"

"I have to find a good lawyer, not in Kingman, but in Vegas."

She put down the deck. "You're in trouble?" she said gleefully.

"Nope. Some Big Shots are, though. Some Big Shots back in Chicago."

"Earl C, you slay me." He could tell her heart was not in her words. "Now just what do you want a lawyer for?"

"I found something today," he said with dignity.

Her eyes were bulging out of her face, reminding Earl C of the gila monster.

"Or maybe it kind of found me. The Law of Averages has come about."

"What is it, Earl C?" Her voice was threatening.

"Don't know as I better tell anyone until I see the attorney."

"If you need an attorney, you better tell me first. You don't have a drop of business sense in your head."

"I'll tell you if you can guess!" He thought for a moment. Then he put it another way. "I'll give you a hint, though. I found it in a cube of Vi-Rite Oleomargarine."

"I reckon you found a thousand-dollar bill," she said sarcastically.

"Might turn into more." He hummed under his breath.

"All right. Animal, vegetable, or mineral?"

His lips twitched. "Animal."

"What are you getting at, Earl C?" She appeared to have stopped breathing; her flesh barely rippled. He recognized the symptoms; she was in a real pucker.

"Animal," he said. "Maybe a mouse."

"For your Live Family Zoo, I reckon."

He hummed again, softly.

"I didn't come here to play kids' games, Earl C," she said, between her teeth. "You tell me, or I high-tail it out of here."

Earl C knew his teasing had gone far enough, because he had to tell Darlene; it was part of his Twenty-Four Hour Excitement. He said, "Just a minute, you wait here." He went into the back room, where he kept his freezer, and returned with a small plastic tackle box. Slowly and elaborately he opened the box and removed a small package, wrapped in aluminum foil. Slowly, even grandly, he undid the foil, then the Vi-Rite wrapping, and held its contents up under the lamp for her to gaze upon.

She stood up and hung over his hand and stared.

"I see a cube of oleomargarine, Earl C. What's so special about that?"

"Look close." He pointed to a particular part.

She bent down to study it. There, smoothly encased in the pale yellow mold, was a darkish section; on close scrutiny it appeared to be made of a hairy organic matter.

"Well?" said Earl C proudly.

"Look here, Earl C, you've got something there all right, and you know it." Darlene was breathing heavily. "Yes, sir, you got a find."

"I'm pretty sure it's half a mouse. I'm fixing to get it scientifically analyzed, for sure."

"It's a something that doesn't belong there, no matter what it is," Darlene said. "Listen, Earl C, you better let me handle it. They'll make you a nice settlement if we go about it correct."

Earl C carefully wrapped up the oleo, fitted it back into its plastic box, and returned it to the freezer. He came back and sat down opposite Darlene.

"You got a lock on that freezer?"

"Yes, ma'am!"

"We could get a real good settlement if you don't bungle things."

"I ain't taking no settlement," Earl C said. His voice took on a kind of rapturous quality. "Those Big Shots in Chicago are going to fix me up with a place in Palm Springs, maybe, or I just might get me a Mobile Home and tour the world. I've always wanted to see the Yellowstone National Park, and New York City. They're going to arrange things for Earl C Bennet nice. I'll take it all the way to the Supreme Court if need be. This time the law's on my side."

"The Supreme Court takes money, Earl C, and you don't have none. But I know something about business. Those folks back in Chicago would make you a decent payment just to get that thing back."

"I don't settle," Earl C said again. "That ain't my way."

The attorney in Las Vegas, a young chap in a fancy office, wearing a bolo tie and expensive boots, said right away that Earl C had a case. "A case," he said, emphasizing the "a" part. "We'll take some photographs of that cube, then I'll get a letter right off, and we'll see what transpires. In this kind of action, they usually oblige by settling out of court. My fee will be a percentage of the settlement." He looked Earl C over. "Twenty percent," he said.

Earl C, holding the traveling styrofoam icebox, with his find in it, on his lap, shook his head. "I ain't going to settle for nothing less than ten grand."

"You may have set your sights a bit too high," the lawyer chap said easily. "But I think we could manage to get a few hundred for you."

Earl C hugged the icebox more closely.

"Those Big Shots sold me an inferior product," he said. "I got this here inferior product on my lap."

Mrs. Zelter, who lives in Portola Valley, outside San Francisco, with her husband and two sons, is the author of several published short stories and of a first novel, *The Honey Bunch* (1969).

I'm fixing to get ten grand, you can tell them that."

Two years went by in which Earl C made many trips into Vegas. He had turned down three offers from Chicago, the highest and last one being \$300. He had changed attorneys four times. The last attorney had a new letter in the mail right now.

Other things had happened, too. Busy with his case, Earl C had neglected what was left of his business, and he was in trouble about his taxes. He had scarcely enough money left to keep him going for a month. The ring-tailed cat had passed, and the kangaroo rat had eaten his way out of his cage and run off. Thick dust had collected on his rock and mineral collection, and the bottles were so dirty they were no longer translucent. People drove by and stopped to use the rest rooms, without patronizing the Café; Earl C was forced to padlock the doors.

But his spirits stayed high; he was still experiencing the Twenty-Four Hour Excitement. Even Darlene's disgust at his turning down the offers did not dampen his dream. He sat in the evenings on his porch and looked out at the hills. "I'm not getting any younger," he said to himself, "but I'm getting richer, slow but sure." He was betting hard on the most recent letter, which the lawyer had made severe.

When the answer came it was a repeat of the last one, with an addition. The addition said this was a final offer; after that they would terminate the correspondence. The lawyer urged Earl C to accept it. Politely, but firmly, he declined. The fifth lawyer he went to see that same afternoon had already heard about the case and said he couldn't do anything more. Earl C packed up his find and headed home. "Right is right," he said to himself. "The law doesn't always serve justice."

That night Darlene stopped by. "What's that up in front of your place, Earl C?" she said. She was referring to the new sign he had made that afternoon in large letters:

ASK TO SEE WHAT I FOUND IN A
CUBE OF VI-RITE OLEOMARGARINE

"I've decided to handle the case myself," he told Darlene.

She sniffed, scornfully. "I just fired that Indian handyman," she said. "He was a no-good Indian. You're a no-good white man, Earl C, but if you accept that last offer, and give me half, you can still have the trailer in return for taking my night shift and some work around the motel. If you don't, the law's going to get you for your taxes."

"When word about my sign gets around, there'll be some activity," said Earl C calmly.

The sign did attract curiosity. Folks stopped by and asked to see what he had found; when he showed them, they looked and marveled. Earl C explained his position to them in detail. "I've been offered four settlements," he said. "I've got all the correspondence locked up in a drawer. But I'm holding out for ten grand. Those Big Shots ain't going to get away with it."

He could tell by their comments they approved of his stand. "That's right, that's the spirit, keep it up," they would say. Then they would drive on.

In late June, badgered by the tax man, Earl C put his Place up for sale. His only prospect, a car-wrecking-lot man, claimed the building was worth nothing and would have to be demolished.

Earl C sold out for peanuts. Then he released the rattler and the sidewinder and the Black Widow out on the Mojave, dropped his rock and mineral and bottle collection off at the Desert Museum in Kingman, took his stuffed gila monster and the tackle box which contained his fortune, and went to live at the Cactus Court. The gila monster decorated the small plastic-top table in the trailer; he put the tackle box in Darlene's freezer and added a lock. His agreement with Darlene was the night shift and doing cleanup and repairs. He didn't tell Darlene that he was just biding his time; he had a new secret plan concerning his litigation.

His new plan involved a lawyer in Phoenix who, he had been told, had special experience in personal injury cases. Earl C liked the sound of that; if there was anybody who had been personally injured, he had. The first chance he had to sneak away from Darlene he drove there with the tackle box. Though the lawyer asked for a higher percentage of the fee, on account of his specialty, he said he felt sure he could do something for him. He would let him know what transpired.

For this reason Earl C had difficulty putting his mind to the work Darlene demanded. He fell asleep on the night shift, while Darlene snored in the back room; folks rang the bell, then drove off when they got no answer. The "No" on the No Vacancy sign stayed unlit more than usual when Earl C took over the desk. Darlene's temper took a turn for the worse.

She put him to whitewashing the rocks which bordered the parking lot; Earl C spilled the white-wash on the pavement and had to endure her wrath. While she puttered around in bedroom slippers and a muumuu and screeched at him to do this, do that, he just smiled to himself, knowing he would soon be rid of her. He had decided on the Mobile Home for sure. But, now, rather than New York City, he favored Southern California. He had never seen the ocean, except in movies and on TV, but he had heard it was much like the desert—shifting shapes, changing colors, and unexpected finds washed up on the shore. When Darlene popped her eyes at him, he blinked and looked right through her. Instead of seeing that massive blob of flesh, he saw the pretty California sea.

One day Darlene brought him a letter from Phoenix which she had already taken the liberty of opening. She threw it down on the table and said, "There you are, Earl C. Take it or leave it."

The Phoenix lawyer had arranged for Earl C to be awarded \$1000, minus his fee. If Earl C didn't accept this, the lawyer wrote, it was all that anyone

could do. Earl C read the letter several times over, then he put it down.

"Well?" said Darlene.

"I guess I'll have to get me another lawyer," he said.

Darlene began to control her breathing.

"I ain't going to compromise on a Once-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity."

Darlene began to yell. "You're more worthless than a Mexican or Indian, Earl C. You'd be better off if you drank yourself silly instead of having found that hunk of mouse! You take that offer, and you start paying me rent until you get down to business. You take that offer, Earl C, or you'll wish you had!"

Earl C said, "It ain't right, so I can't take it," and shut up.

Earl C knew Darlene was crooked, but he never realized how far her crookedness could go. Late that afternoon, purposely, and with malice aforethought, she took the tackle box out of her freezer, unwrapped the oleo, and set it on top of the plaster burro in the full sun in front of the Cactus Court. When she called it to Earl C's attention, it had already thawed. The oleo had slid down the burro's rump, leaving the bits and pieces of the hairy organic matter sticking to the plaster back.

Darlene stood there in her muumuu, watching Earl C. Then her eyes screwed up and her body

began to quiver; soon her shaking grew epic like a mighty earthquake. Her laughter wasn't silent this time; little snorts of amusement escaped from her compressed lips. She took the garden hose and sprayed the burro off.

Earl C walked slowly to the trailer and got his deer rifle and loaded it and came back and shot Darlene through her heart. Darlene slid softly to the ground, clutching the garden hose. She looked funny dead. She seemed to have deflated, all at once, like a balloon. Her heart's blood mingled with the water and was changing from dark red to pale pink.

Some people, who had heard the shot, came out of their units, but Earl C paid them no mind. He turned off the hose, then walked slowly back to his trailer. When he got there, he sat down. From his window he could see the desert shimmering in the distance; in the background were the hills. The light was such you couldn't be sure just where they were every moment; they changed their position like phantoms. Sometimes they looked real close up, sometimes faraway.

If luck was on your side, you could come on finds in those hills. But he had had his luck and used it up; it was too late now for him. Just the same, he enjoyed knowing the finds were there. He waited, with quiet integrity, for the sheriff's men to come and hand him over to the law. □

AN UNGODLY HOUR

by Ross J. Talarico

I sit at ease in a strange bathtub.
All my dreams
Gather at the water's edge
Like the silver ring around a fine
China bowl. The tips
Of my fingers
Wrinkle like old fruit.

I slouch under the lukewarm sea
As low as I can.
Amused, I imagine death
By water.
I feel my body slip
Smooth
Along the white stone
Of three thousand ocean nymphs.

There, in the distance,
My knees stick up
From the water,
The tombstones of lonely sailors.

SEX AND THE MARRIED COUPLE

by Paul Wilkes

Sex is very much OK at 4910 Forest Park Boulevard in St. Louis, where Dr. William Masters and Virginia Johnson preside over their much publicized do-it-yourself therapy for couples with problems in bed. A reporter tells how Masters and Johnson work and how they view their efforts "to put sex back into its natural context."

"Hey, mister, what floor ya goin' to in there?" the cabdriver asked, straining his neck to gain a good look at his rider.

The cabbie's question finally registered with the rider, who was fumbling in his pocket, already moist with perspiration from the muggy St. Louis summer day.

"Uh, I think it's the first . . . no it's the third floor."

He smiled so knowingly. "Going in there alone, are ya, mister?"

"Yeh, you see, I'm going in there . . ."

"You don't have to explain to me, mister. You just have a good time, because if you can't make it that way, life ain't worth much."

The cabbie was still smiling, smiling sympathetically, which is not the way of most cabbies, as he slipped back into traffic in front of the building on Forest Park Boulevard. Made of prepoured marbled beige slabs supported by white pillars, and with all its venetian blinds closed, 4910 is as nondescript and conservative as its name: Central Medical Building. It is only when those who have been referred to 4910 for special difficulties—one of which the cabbie knew about—come into the lobby and look up at the directory that they know they are in the right building. There it is: Reproductive Biology Research Foundation. There they are: Masters, W. H., Johnson, V. E.

William Masters is a gynecologist by training, who was well known for his work in steroid replacement and infertility before he went into what he always dreamed would be his life's work: human



sexual functioning—how it happens, why some people have difficulties with it, how they can be helped, and how their difficulties can be prevented. Virginia Johnson studied psychology but never received a degree for it. She responded to Bill Masters' request at the Washington University placement office for a female assistant who was good with people, able to talk openly with them, able to understand their problems. For the last fourteen years they have worked together. Their names, always in tandem and always in that order, have become synonymous with the scientific study of sex. This year they published a book that told what they did after they moved out of the laboratory and into their offices to work with men and women, most of them married and most already in pairs, who either could not function at all sexually or were doing so at an unacceptably low level of success or enjoyment. *Human Sexual Inadequacy* fulfilled the promise of *Human Sexual Response*, Masters and Johnson's first book, and also disarmed those critics who saw little reason to record the sexual act on film and by various sensing devices, a *modus operandi* for the first book. Whatever the critics thought, both books have been instantly successful. Combined hardcover sales now appear to have climbed beyond the half-million mark.

It is actually on the second floor that Masters and Johnson have their offices and do their work. In Room 220 shortly after 8 A.M. the air conditioning is overresponding, creating a slightly drafty and cold reception area, where Muzak is already playing its prerecorded Siren's repertoire. A familiar song. An old song blends into the violinized rock: "My One and Only Love."

Bill Masters has been up for nearly three hours. Before six he rose, drove to a high school quarter-mile track, jogged six slow laps, walked one, and then finished off with one fast lap. For a fifty-four-year-old man, who is bald except for a ring of white hair left by hereditary tonsure and two shafts of white sideburns, Bill Masters is still an attractive man. Writers have searched for descriptions of him, and because of the nature of his work, have been charitable but incorrect in labeling him as the look of the concerned family physician or the involved marriage counselor. The Masters look is hard, penetrating, an X-ray look that discourages frivolity and commands immediate candor. It seems to say: "Of course. I'll help you, but let's get on with it." When he moves his eyes, the right one lags behind, temporarily giving him a double image. Anyone seeing him for the first time might rivet attention on his steel-blue eyes and try to figure out which one, if either, is training on him.

Gini Johnson, wearing a black and white patterned overblouse and white uniform pants, is now on her way to the Foundation in an open convertible. She is an attractive forty-five-year-old who could, if she dedicated time to herself instead of her work,

be ravishing. In the publicity pictures shot for their second book, Gini was made up by George Masters (no relative) and benefited greatly by eyeliner, eyeshadow, false eyelashes that wisp up quickly at the end, and lipstick applied by brush; but she usually wears her hair swept back from her face into a ponytail or covered by a fall that is a shade off from her own auburn. She smiles more readily than Masters, but keeps her lower jaw set, which prevents her from making full-fledged cheek-wrinkling grins.

Since the beginning of this year, when word began to circulate that Masters and Johnson were ready to publish their second book, they have made themselves available, within reason, to the print media, particularly the women's magazines, which they consider a vital conduit for their information. After the first book, they appeared on the *Today* show, were interviewed by NBC for Huntley-Brinkley, and whistle-stopped from medical convention to medical convention, in an effort to explain to the lay and professional public what they were trying to do. Television has been shortchanged this time around. Although they have refused all talk shows and interviews, they have standing offers from Merv Griffin, Dick Cavett, and David Frost asking for a visit, under any conditions or time limits that Masters and Johnson would like to impose—no trained seals before or after, no monologue, no music. None of these offers has been accepted.

Those who have come to talk with Masters and Johnson about their work find that conversations occur in small segments, crowded into their busy schedule. In addition to counseling couples and working in infertility, Masters and Johnson have a half-million-dollar Foundation to administer and are now beginning to structure a postgraduate course in their techniques. It will be run by Dr. Ray Waggoner, immediate past president of the American Psychiatric Association, and Emily H. Mudd, professor emeritus of family study in psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania, who have just joined the staff. Some conversations occur during lunch in the library, where a stack of issues of *Hospital Practice* and *Playboy* are pushed aside to make room for cold cuts, rye bread, potato chips, and iced tea. The library is small; ten or twelve people can be squeezed in. The number of volumes is not impressive, but the field of sexology hasn't produced many scholarly or even peripherally useful books. One of man's most basic needs—Masters claims it ranks second only to self-preservation—hasn't been a proper area for study. Here it is, unashamedly. On Bill Masters' desk, a lucite cube with Picasso's erotic and mildly pornographic sketches. In Gini Johnson's office, a carving of two nude bodies, man and woman, together. On a shelf below her assortment of reference books is a roughhewn wooden block, with the outlines of a man and woman, not touching but contemplative, emerging out of the side that has been partially carved.

Masters has said it so many times: "Our job is to put sex back into its natural context; it is a perfectly normal function—as normal as breathing. Why do we have all these prohibitions, why have we legislated against it?" Sex is OK at 4910 Forest Park Boulevard. It can even be joked about. A gentleman wrote to say he could help Masters and Johnson in their work, for he had found that prior to his climax, his stomach growled. Now a stomach growl from a staff member will be greeted by, "Do you want to be alone or can we watch?" They have seen so many tense couples go through the first days of the two-week therapy program that a tense look on the face of a staff member evokes a saccharine "How did it go last night?" Sex back in context.

By midmorning Masters has counseled two couples. The first is in the last days of a two-week stay and had come to the Foundation with a typical problem: premature ejaculation on the part of the male that had resulted in a nonorgasmic wife. Both problems have been overcome. In place of two people who barely spoke upon arrival, there are now chatty, hand-holding honeymooners. The second couple has not been able to conceive. After a ten-minute interview, they come out of an office and wait in the hallway while Masters goes into a small laboratory. He comes back with a plastic vial with a cork stopper. Masters needs to check the viability of the man's sperm, and as he could, or would, not produce some by masturbating in one of the many lavatories, he will go back to his hotel room and, with his wife's assistance, produce.

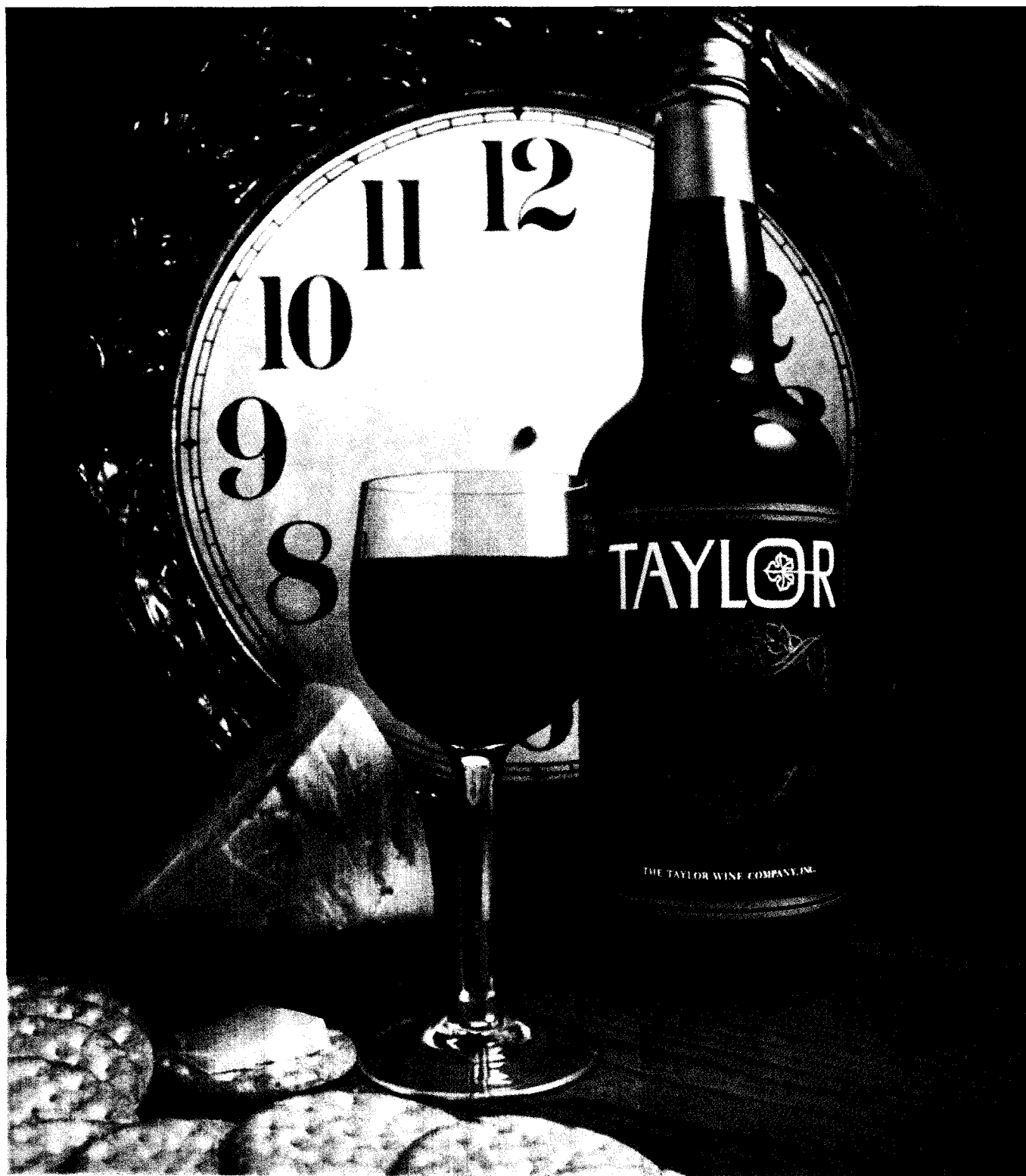
Over twenty pieces of mail await Masters' personal response. Others, which ask for general information on the therapy program, are answered by a secretary and a series of form letters that are personally addressed and then typed through an automatic typewriter. The cry of the sexually maladjusted resounds from the pages, contained in envelopes with postmarks from as close as Illinois or as far away as Italy or Malta. In March there were 102 written inquiries; *Human Sexual Inadequacy* was published on April 27. In May, 429 letters. In June, 606. A man with primary impotence and no money wants the Foundation to supply a surrogate partner, as it has done scores of times in the past. "Tell him we have already taken all the free-care cases we can afford to this year; in fact we're over 30 percent free care and only budgeted to do 25." "Next, tell this guy in Italy there is no known way to increase male sperm production." "Here's a guy with troubles every place but in bed. Tell him to see a marriage counselor." One woman offers her services as a ghostwriter for a popularization of *Human Sexual Inadequacy*. That is a sensitive subject. The answer is no. Another writer wants permission to quote twenty-eight pages from the book. "So that he can wrap some drivel around it, put on a cover, and sell it for a couple of bucks. Tell him no." A man asks specific questions about his trouble with premature ejaculation. "Tell

him to read the book." A woman goes into detail about the pain she experiences during thrusting in intercourse. Is it real or imagined, she asks. Bill Masters leans back for a moment and smiles. His abrupt manner in answering correspondence might leave the impression of high-handedness or lack of concern. There is neither. He is sympathetic to human need or else he wouldn't have given up a \$100,000-a-year private practice sixteen years ago to work as a \$27,000-a-year researcher. And, he *does* answer every inquiry. It is just that he is asked to give diagnoses and miracle cures for the price of a first-class stamp and some stationery. "Tell her, tell her kindly, tell her how the hell do I know and that she should consult her local doctor."

Since they began eleven years ago to help couples solve their sexual dysfunctions, Masters and Johnson have refined the total treatment package to assure that patients are as relaxed as possible, given the problems they will have to talk about and the interpersonal therapy they will be exposed to. Before couples arrive, they are booked into such elegant accommodations as a penthouse suite in the nearby Chase Park Plaza Hotel or into one of the two small apartments that the Foundation maintains at the Forest Park Hotel. Each has cooking facilities and rents for \$100 a week. Even the poorest patients must provide for their own transportation and living expenses. Scheduling of couples is done four months in advance, and for those who can bear the full cost, it is \$2500 for the two-week program and five years of follow-up.

Mrs. Lynn Strenkofski, a bubbly brunette whose name is on all correspondence with patients so they feel they already know her, greets the couple as soon as they arrive. But never by name if there is anyone else in the room. That is cardinal rule one, for many Masters and Johnson patients are supposed to be motoring through Mexico for two weeks, or camping in Canada, away from the telephone. In addition to the malady the couple has reported, a few things are known. The woman will not menstruate in the next two weeks, nor is she nursing a baby. The couple have probably made an attempt at intercourse the night before coming to St. Louis, a last valiant attempt to show each other that they are basically sound and do not really need the treatment. They are wrong.

Wanda Bowen, a thin, graying woman with a ready smile, awaits the new couple on the second floor. She is dressed in a white pants suit and beige scarf, which is standard attire for the staff. She is the office manager and also the chief of the psychological-warfare department. "Warm, friendly, but professional" are her bywords. "If a couple walks in and somebody giggles about somebody else spilling some coffee, that couple will automatically think, 'They know about us. They've read the report. They know



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NEW YORK 86 PROOF

I can't make it. They know I'm a prude.'" When a dentist Mrs. Bowen knew at the time she lived in Jacksonville, Florida, came with his wife for treatment, she remained distant and impersonal. At the end of their successful visit, Mrs. Bowen switched from a professional smile to a personal one, winked, and said, "If it fits into the scheme of things, say hello to some people back there for me; say that on your fishing trip to Wisconsin you met me in a restaurant." Keeping staff members has been a problem for the Foundation. Some never learn the decorum needed. Some relish the vicarious thrill of knowing what is going on behind the closed doors on the second floor. Some pull stupid acts like calling a hotel manager, identifying the Foundation, and telling him that a certain well-known person and his wife are going to stay at his establishment for the next two weeks.

Mrs. Bowen gives each couple an ominous-looking plain brown paper envelope that contains nothing more crucial than a restaurant guide, the schedule for the chimpanzee show at the St. Louis zoo, locations of laundromats, planetarium shows. The two weeks in St. Louis are not two weeks by the bed as some expect. Depending on their needs and degree of articulation, they will spend from twelve to twenty-five hours in therapy sessions at the Foundation offices. Many other hours will be taken up with application of the therapy guidelines.

Now, after all the years of agony and months of waiting, the couple is ready to begin. In their first interview, they are faced by both cotherapists. It could be Masters and Johnson or a second team, Dr. Richard Spitz and Sallie Schumacher, or any combination of one male and one female. Dual sex-therapy teams, a Masters and Johnson concept, give each member of the marital unit a friend in court, a person who knows what the first nocturnal emission was like, or who knows what happened during the first menstrual cycle. The couple tell of their problems and their hopes, and then each one pairs off with the member of the same sex on the therapy team to discuss family background, religious beliefs, sexual activity with this mate and others. "Did you ever watch anyone else, accidentally or otherwise, involved in sexual activity? Do you recall your reaction? Which parent did you feel closest to? Who usually chooses the time for lovemaking? Do you tell your husband [wife] what pleases you most?"

The picture that emerges could keep soap operas in material for years. Two Ph.D.'s, she in anthropology, he in physics, have a marriage unconsummated after four years. A nonorgasmic woman was traumatized at fifteen with her first sexual encounter—a homosexual one with an overzealous teacher. A husband, out of work, turns to drink and loses his potency. A frustrated woman from a

Fundamentalist Protestant background, whose premarital physical contact consisted of three chaste kisses, who fought to keep herself covered during intercourse while her husband fumbled through the nightclothes to do the job. A man from a Fundamentalist background whose first sexual encounter was with a prostitute, *standing up*, is impotent. A man punishing his mother by denying her a grandchild is denying his wife any sexual activity.

On the second day, the male patient talks with the female therapist and his mate with the male, and each goes deeper into background and difficulties. The couple know they are not supposed to engage in any form of sexual activity, and for most, at this point in the program, this is not too tall an order. On the third day, there is a round-table discussion, stories are matched, glossed-over fabrications are confronted, righted, and the couple are ready to begin the practical-application phase. They are given instructions to go back to their room and on two occasions simply rub or touch the other person wherever they would like, except genitally, just to give them pleasure. It was Gini Johnson's idea eleven years ago that non-demanding touching, called "sensitive focus," was the first step in re-establishing a physical relationship that could lead to successful sexual functioning.

From the fourth day on, couples in therapy are encouraged to proceed, at their own pace, toward a more complete appreciation of the sexual component in their lives. Wanda Bowen and her staff see the couples go in for their daily sessions with Masters and Johnson and then emerge. "I don't have to listen to the tapes [all sessions are recorded] or look at the progress sheet," Mrs. Bowen says. "It's all there in their faces. Some are crying. Some snap at each other. Some are holding hands and smiling. The anthropologist Ph.D. was a mess in dumpy clothes on the first day. When she came in one day with lipstick, her hair done, and earrings on, I didn't have to ask anybody. She was advertising to the world that they had made it."

The men who come to Masters and Johnson for help break down into two basic categories, those who cannot perform sexually (primary impotence if they have never been able to achieve an erection and have intercourse; secondary impotence if, once having been successful, they are no longer able) and those who can perform (but who have an orgasm before they are able to satisfy their mate—premature ejaculation—or those who are never able to achieve orgasm—ejaculatory incompetence). No women are considered frigid by Masters and Johnson. "The word means nothing," says Masters. They are victims of either primary orgasmic dysfunction (they have never experienced orgasm), or situational orgasmic dysfunction (once successful, but not currently).

The therapy is carefully orchestrated, from the moment of first instructed touch to successful intercourse and orgasm, to keep both partners calm and undemanding of one another. "Fear of performance

Paul Wilkes is a free-lance writer based in New York City.

is the biggest factor in sexual dysfunction, and once there is no premium on performance, we can get a lot of work done," says Masters. That work was detailed in *Human Sexual Inadequacy*, where Masters and Johnson reported they had failed in only 20 percent of 790 cases of male and female dysfunction that had been treated for two weeks and then followed up for five years. They did not claim success in the other 80 percent, stating that success was too difficult to define, but that failure, either in the two-week program or during the five-year follow-up, was easy to identify. Masters and Johnson's most stunning success came in the area of premature ejaculation, where only 5 of the 186 men thus afflicted could not bring their problem under control. By use of a "squeeze technique" where the female grasps the penis when the man says he is ready to climax, thus removing his desire to do so, Masters and Johnson have virtually proven this sexual problem can be vanquished. Their highest failure rate (40 percent) occurred with primary impotent men, many of whom could not overcome religious strictures that have effectively castrated them.

Because their work is shrouded in secrecy, few firsthand examples of how Masters and Johnson operate have reached the general public. One such story appeared in the July, 1969, issue of *Ladies' Home Journal*, told by an anonymous woman who had been married for nine years and found little sexual fulfillment in her marriage to a man who suffered from premature ejaculation. The scenario is all too familiar: intercourse degenerates into release for her husband and frustration for herself . . . the wife finds herself less responsive . . . she avoids her husband . . . he accuses her of extramarital activity . . . she becomes even less responsive . . . the psychiatrist is consulted . . . "Don't fret my dear," he answers, "your husband has a low sexual-interest level and unfortunately his problem of premature orgasm cannot be helped. Forget your problem and get involved in hobbies, go to the theater; there is more in life than sex."

This woman knew that, but she still wanted her share. Under Masters and Johnson's care everything seemed to be going well until Dr. Masters asked her if she would stay with the marriage if the sexual aspects were improved. She answered that she didn't know. "Why did you come here?" he shot back at the woman. At that point she knew he wouldn't stand for any idle chitchat, and she replied that whether or not the marriage survived, she didn't want to deprive her husband of this chance to find his manhood. She was surprised when the stern-faced Dr. Masters promised that within a year her husband would again be confident—both sexually and in his everyday life—and it would be due to her.

The evening before the round-table discussion the nervous couple found themselves consoling one an-

other, holding each other—something unique in their marriage. They were alone in a strange city with no one to resort to except each other. This is obviously not an accidental benefit of the program. On the third day, instructed to go back to their room and simply "pleasure" each other with no special goal in mind, they did so. The woman explained: "I had never before been able to touch my husband in an uninhibited way and he had never learned to caress me with love. But now, with our fears of sexual performance or nonperformance removed, we relaxed and enjoyed each other. I was not really able to be purely platonic about the experience; I found myself becoming aroused in ways I had not felt for years."

In their first attempt at intercourse two days later, the couple were mutually successful. "It was not difficult to accomplish these victories . . . we were supremely confident and, as a result, were able to drop all pretenses." Along with her new physical openness, the woman found herself extremely sensitive to her husband's slightest ill word or look. And, over a trivial matter, a fight occurred. To the couple's astonishment Masters and Johnson were unmoved. Arguments frequently happen at this stage of therapy, they explained, and after all, weren't the couple in St. Louis to make their mistakes? The argument and the ensuing makeup assured the couple that the therapy was applicable not only under idyllic circumstances, but could work in everyday life. When Mrs. Johnson took the woman aside to ask how things were going, the woman said, "I was amazed to hear myself rhapsodize about how deeply in love I was. I was not being a Pollyanna; I knew that all our problems had not been solved overnight. But I felt that just the fact that some doors had been opened, that we were enjoying each other so much, was a small miracle. To go from almost nothing to so much in a short time made me very optimistic about our future."

Now that work with heterosexual couples has been established and proved, Masters and Johnson are spending an increasing number of hours working with homosexual couples. Contrary to what the straight world thinks, Masters and Johnson have found there are many impotent male homosexuals and nonorgasmic lesbians whose sexual distress in the relationship they are drawn to makes life and the relationship miserable. In addition to treating those two dysfunctions, Masters and Johnson have been working with those homosexuals who want to return to a heterosexual life. The first homosexual couples to be treated went through the therapy program two years ago, and so far the failure rate is within tolerable limits. Research on the physiology of human homosexual response, which will be included in a book to be published in the mid-1970s, was finished in 1965. While heterosexual response took six and a half years and thousands of feet of color film to record, homosexual response was completed in eighteen months and without visual documentation. The homosexual report will show how similar, almost without variation, the

orgasm of two homosexuals is to that of two heterosexuals. (The famed "green room," where heterosexual and homosexual arousals and orgasms were duly recorded, now is painted a restful beige. In place of the hospital bed, sensors, cameras, and lights is a series of couches that will be used for post-marital group counseling. Only a baseboard riddled with electrical outlets and a two-way mirror tell of the room's past—and illustrious—history.)

The work with homosexuals might appear to endanger Masters and Johnson's standing in the medical community, which is high, if recent, in origin. But in five years their next book will probably raise no more eyebrows than did *Human Sexual Inadequacy*, which was greeted as healing balm for one of the most persistent wounds of society, a difficulty that is said to afflict half the marriages in the United States. Masters and Johnson have consistently kicked over barriers, pushed their way through myth, mores, and misconception, to come up with undisputedly sound medical and therapeutic information. When a Roman Catholic nun comes to them with complaints of pelvic pain, a bloated feeling at other than "that time of the month," and they find massive congestion that can be relieved in only one way, they tell the nun to masturbate to orgasm.

They do their work in a conservative city, St. Louis, a city that seems to have a special tolerance for research in medicine and science. If the city wanted Missouri law enforced, officers could come to Masters and Johnson and demand that their program of providing surrogate partners for single, sexually dysfunctional males be stopped. It is against the law in the state of Missouri for a man and woman, not married, to engage in sexual intercourse. There has been no harassment. (One disgruntled husband, however, has brought a \$750,000 suit against Masters and Johnson, charging that his wife was paid \$750 to engage in sexual activities with two men. Masters and Johnson have made it no secret that they have supplied female partners for males, but have also been extremely careful to choose women who are willing, sympathetic mates for the two-week therapy program and not promiscuous fun-seekers. Masters and Johnson have dismissed the suit as "ridiculous.")

At first, under the auspices of Washington University, the work of Masters and Johnson was done secretly. Once they began telling professional groups of their concepts and early findings, the word leaked to the local press and national medical writers. But the press agreed voluntarily not to print fragmentary information about the work in St. Louis and to wait until the first book was ready. If it had been Bill Masters' decision alone, the two books and medical journal articles would have been the extent of communication between the Reproductive Biology Research Foundation and the outside world. It was Gini Johnson, experienced in the ways of

advertising and radio, who saw both the value and opportunity of communicating with ordinary men and women so that they, in turn, would begin to demand the type of therapy Masters and Johnson offered for professional use.

While resisting offers from publishers for additional books, from cosmetic firms for endorsement of a lotion that patients have used successfully during the two-week therapy program, and from movie producers, one of whom was willing to pay \$100,000 for the use of the title of their first book, Masters and Johnson have stayed in firm control of much of their press. They have demanded, and usually obtained, the right to see copy before it was published. When *McCall's* was ready to run an article about their work that Mrs. Johnson thought was "bits and pieces and took our work out of context," she had the magazine scrap it and wrote the article herself. *Time*, a subsidiary of Time Inc., the parent company of Masters and Johnson's publisher, Little, Brown and Company, wanted advance galleys of *Human Sexual Inadequacy* so they could prepare a cover story to run when the book appeared. They were turned down. Masters and Johnson have never cooperated in working with magazines that wanted to do first-person stories about couples who have been treated. One such couple, in fact, approached NET and was interviewed on TV. After reading the transcript, Gini Johnson had to admit that the interview was a good reflection on why the couple was having troubles. "The woman had all the answers; every time he'd start to say something, she'd correct it and go off on a tangent. I'd be impotent in the face of that."

For instance:

Man: There was something very interesting I think they missed. We were told, in other words, if my wife or myself got out of line with each other, we should try to make up some sort of a signal that it's a danger—

Woman: This is later.

Man: Yeah, this is later, yeah.

Woman: You're jumping the gun.

Man: OK, take it.

And yet, even this overbearing woman and her subdued husband were able to find each other physically under the guidance of Masters and Johnson. Some other excerpts from the interview with WNDT-TV's Sherrye Henry give a behind-the-scenes flavor:

Woman: Incidentally, at the first session we were not allowed to touch any sexual parts of either body. This was most important. I guess it did lead to the sensuousness which they expected of us. The next part of the lesson consisted of allowing us to touch one another on our sexual parts. But we weren't allowed to indulge in any sexual intercourse. We became sensitized, and we jumped the gun, as we later found out they expected us to do, and we did have sex.

Interviewer: Well, was it good for you?

Man: Yes, great!

Interviewer: How precise were their instructions to you? When they sent you back home to practice, what did they give you? Diagrams? Pictures?

Woman: Dr. Masters would sit in his chair behind his desk, and he would tell us exactly what he wanted us to do and he would use his hands to explain to us what he wanted done.

Interviewer: Well, let's go back then to what I asked about your attitudes toward each other. As the release came in sex, did also the release come in your private—?

Woman: Physically, yes. We then had a mental barrier we hadn't broken down. With all married couples, you have two animals; you have a body and you have a mind. Our minds weren't meeting, and the only way that the minds could meet was by us having a battle. Dr. Masters tantalized me and said that he was going to get my husband a blonde. He [Masters] wanted him [husband] to do anything to make me angry. He [Masters] had broken off sex between us. So finally we were riding down the street looking for a restaurant, and he wanted me to read the map of St. Louis and I knew nothing about St. Louis, and he started screaming and yelling at me, and as soon as he did that, my hair stood on end, and I told him to take me back to the hotel and I proceeded to cut him to bits. I did mental surgery on him. The next morning we went anxiously to see Dr. Masters and Mrs. Johnson, and when the girl saw me downstairs in the reception room, she wanted to know what happened. I just said that men weren't any good. Dr. Masters came to the door of the reception room and he looked at me and said, "You, I want you in my office immediately. You [husband] stay here." And so I went into his office and I broke down; I cried like a baby. I told him what happened, and then Mrs. Johnson came in, and she literally tore me apart. Told me exactly what I had been doing wrong. Which was the best thing she could have done. I didn't like what she said. But it had its effect. And two minutes later they came back after me again. I went inside and they were laughing. I was very upset by all this and I went home and I cried from 11 o'clock in the morning until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. And he [husband] was there, the first time he really saw me.

Interviewer: As a person.

Woman: A person and a woman and I . . .

Interviewer: Who needed him, I suppose.

Woman: Right.

Masters and Johnson, who will surely take their place in the lineage of Freud and Kinsey, have made personal sacrifices to accomplish their work. Bill Masters has not taken a day off from his work in sixteen years. But he is a devoted football fan and a season-ticket holder for all the home football games of the St. Louis Cardinals. His eighty- and ninety-hour workweeks have left many things in their wake, including his marriage. He lived apart from

his wife for almost two years, and is now divorced. He has worked at this feverish pace because he believes he has much more work to do and, at fifty-four, not enough years to accomplish it all. He wants to train senior therapists from all over the country who can then teach the techniques in their own clinics and medical schools. He wants to assemble a statistically sound group of adolescents and aged to study their sexual difficulties. He wants to develop preventive means to keep people from sexual dysfunction. All this for a man who describes himself as "not a people person; I could be happy alone in a laboratory for the rest of my life."

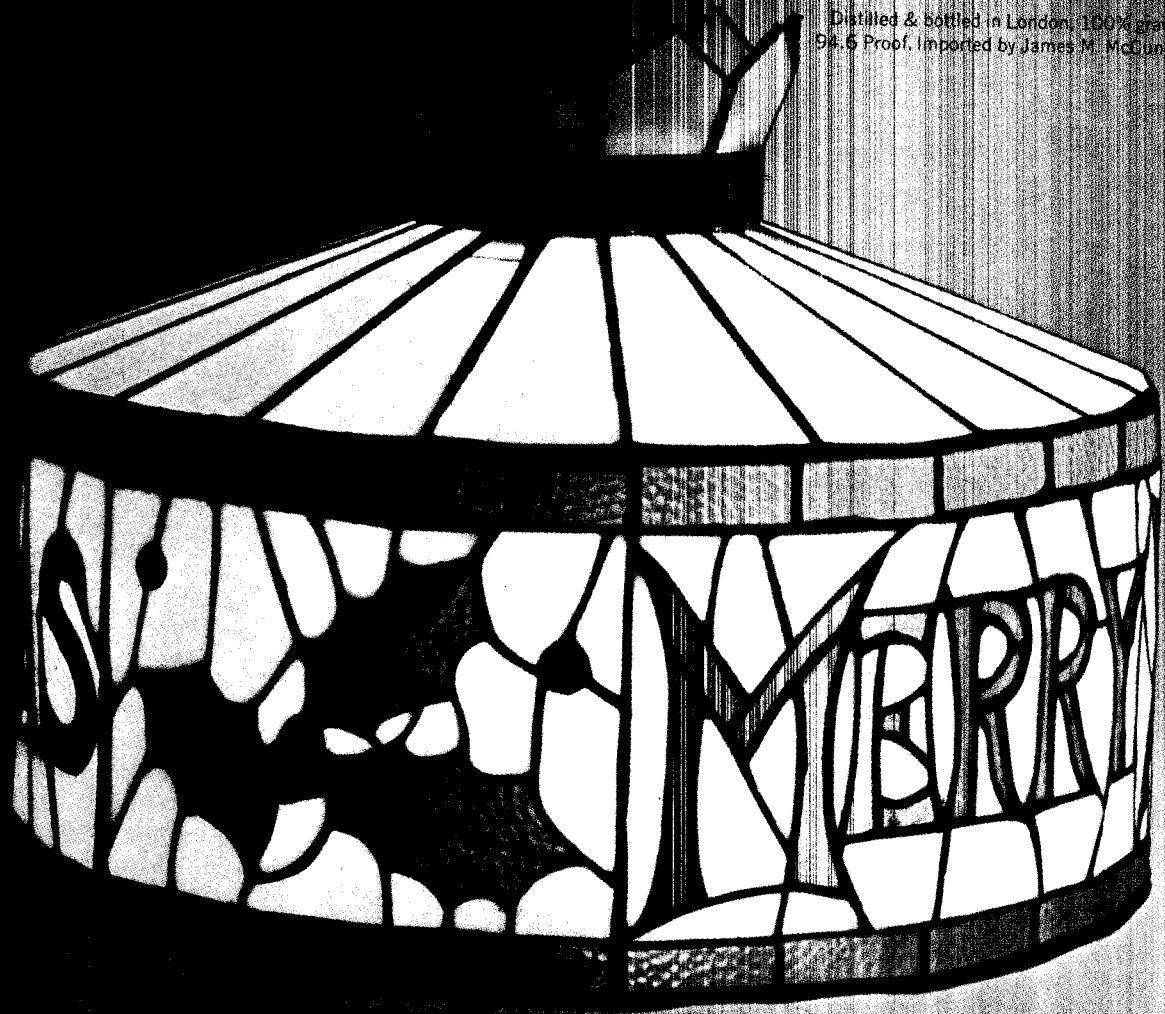
Gini Johnson, born Eshelman, married band-leader George Johnson and sang with him for several years. She was never the gushy type ("I was raised in a Victorian family, but we were warm to each other with words, not touches") and is not one to indulge in the very medium of sensitivity she has developed. After the first book, the inevitable question was asked of her: Did your own marriage fail (she was divorced in 1956) because of sexual troubles? She was quick to answer no, and looking back today, she is more calm about it: "He was a band-leader, a night person. We had children; they were day people. The two just didn't mix." Now that she feels she can relax and once again begin to enjoy life, she is concerned. "I've been removed from society for so long, I really don't know what I liked before. I don't know what I'd go back to."

Masters and Johnson, if they have little else in their personal lives, have each other. They work together seven days a week, they socialize together, they spend evenings at Virginia Johnson's comfortable home in a St. Louis suburb. All of which has kept people speculating about the degree of their involvement. "After my divorce, you won't see us running off to Mexico or anything like that," Masters said last spring, with a perfectly straight face. "But I may take it upon myself to chase as many women, eighteen years and older, as a slightly fat, bald, fifty-four-year-old can catch."

The response is made late one afternoon as he soaks in the pool at Gini Johnson's home. It is his idea of relaxation just to sit on the steps of the pool with the water lazily lapping at the long, white hairs on his chest, and then to swim a dozen lengths before dinner. Inside the deceptively simple brick house, with a stunning bilevel addition done in exposed rough beams with vaulted ceiling, Gini Johnson is preparing wild rice and peas and loins of pork and beef. Dressed in a striped caftan, she pads bare-foot around the kitchen.

The house, like the rest of their lives, has an aura of privacy. Bill Masters points to a stand of four reasonably mature trees, through which can barely be seen windows of the only house not sheltered from view by topography, or by the high fence encircling the property. Those trees were recently moved into place to provide protection from those

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who would like to see what goes on in the backyard of the famed sex researchers. Some of the wealthy who have sought Masters and Johnson's care, and were willing to pay them anything to perform their function outside St. Louis, have been turned down. Masters and Johnson simply won't leave all their other work for two weeks.

For many male and female homosexuals, fear of detection is an almost paralyzing thought. One, a well-known member of local society, ostensibly happily married, is a lesbian and has come to Masters and Johnson for aid. Over the past decade, Masters and Johnson have used many apartments in and around St. Louis to protect the identity of their patients. And they have been successful in this game of cat and mouse; no one has broken the security. Many have tried. Masters found that a physician in an adjoining suite was using the same lavatory an inordinate number of times daily. One day, Masters saw him go in and waited for him to come out. One hour, two, three, four hours passed, and finally the physician unlocked the door and walked out, the stethoscope he had pressed against the wall still in his hand. Photographs taken through Foundation windows from across the street have been sent anonymously to Masters and Johnson.

As he prepared for his work in sex research and therapy, Masters studied the life of the late Alfred Kinsey, to see what motivated him and to see what pitfalls he could avoid. Masters found that Kinsey developed an overpowering ego, would not train a qualified successor, and thus guaranteed that his work would end with his death. He never collaborated with a female researcher although he was studying both sexes. And in his last years, Kinsey was obsessed with the thought that everyone was trying to steal his data. Masters admits to a mild case of paranoia himself. "You have to get a little sick in the head to try to figure out what somebody who is really sick in the head will do to break out our security. It isn't pleasant to continually worry about what some goon is up to."

Those who have criticized Masters and Johnson for their work have found them unwilling to defend themselves. "Continued research and publication of findings is our response; we can't take time to strike back at our detractors," says Masters doggedly. Over the dinner at Gini Johnson's, they loosen up and let go with a barb or two. They fault Leslie Farber—whose article "I'm Sorry Dear" in a 1964 issue of *Commentary* condemned their approach as mechanistic—for writing from hearsay two years before *Human Sexual Response* appeared. That book was written eighteen months earlier than planned because questions that the Farber article posed within the professional community could be answered with nothing short of the entire report.

In answer to Rollo May, who says, "They put the emphasis on orgasm when it should be on love. They

help some couples, and I congratulate them for that, but their total impact on society is to send us further down the road of misunderstanding ourselves and our need to love one another," they have but a short reply. Smiling serenely, Gini Johnson says, "Dr. May has the corner on the love market and we couldn't presume to know anything about it." Masters adds, "If our job were only to reorient people sexually, we could do that in a long weekend. We *are* treating the whole marriage, and we start with the most intimate and necessary of all communications."

Late in the evening, after weaving its way through Victorian hangups, the difficulties the children of Masters and Johnson have had to face ("I don't want you hanging around with that Masters girl; her father's a sex maniac," one mother told her daughter), the conversation moves to an odd subject: why Masters and Johnson consider *Playboy* a good outlet for sex information. "There are millions of men reading it, eighteen to twenty-eight years old, who parade as knowledgeable about sex but who have the same old misconceptions about mutual orgasms being a necessity and penis size being important," says Gini Johnson. "Men read the magazine predisposed to reading about sex, and we want them to have good information." Masters and Johnson serve as consultants to the magazine, and when sex questions are asked in the *Playboy* Advisor, they edit the answers. After Hugh Hefner learned of their work, and his editor in the behavioral sciences, Nat Lehrman, did a penetrating interview with them, Hefner's foundation donated \$25,000 and continues to donate annually.

Still later in the evening, just before Bill Masters is ready to drive back into St. Louis, his partner muses. Lately she has found she is getting forgetful, absentminded, and one day panicked when she thought she had left office records in her convertible and returned to find the car empty. The records were sitting on a table at home where she had left them. "I have always valued my sense of color, of being able to put furnishings, clothes together and making them look good. But all the years of seclusion. I was in a store the other day, and I had to walk out—I couldn't make a choice of colors; I really couldn't see the colors."

In his Chevrolet Nova (bottom of the line, no radio) a half hour later, Bill Masters, still in his blue terry cloth après-pool slacks, is speeding along a highway. Blocks of light form slowly on his face, expand quickly, then disappear as cars approach and pass. His sentences are short and punctuated by long silences. "Of course, it is great to finally see results. . . . People don't know that with ninety hours of work each week there's not time for anything else. . . . Biologically I guess I'm eighty. . . . But I don't really know. . . . I don't really know if I'd do the whole thing over again or not." □



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AROUND PASTOR BONHOEFFER

by Stanley Kunitz

THE PLOT AGAINST HITLER

Jittery, missing their cues,
Bach's glory jailed in their throats,
they were clustered round the piano
in the Biedermeier parlor,
sisters and brothers
and their brothers by marriage,
rehearsing a cantata
for Papa's seventy-fifth birthday.
Kyrie eleison: Night
like no other night, plotted
and palmed,
omega of terror,
packed like a bullet
in the triggered chamber.
Surely the men had arrived at their stations.
Through the staves of the music
he saw their target strutting,
baring its malignant heart.
Lord, let the phone ring!
Let the phone ring!

NEXT TO LAST THINGS

Slime, in the grains of the State,
like smut in the corn,
from the top infected.
Hatred made law,
wolves bred out of maggots
rolling in blood,
and the seal of the church ravished
to receive the crooked sign.
All the steeples were burning.
In the chapel of his ear
he had heard the midnight bells
jangling: *if you permit*
this evil, what is the good
of the good of your life?
And he forsook the last things,
the dear inviolable mysteries—
Plato's lamp, passed from the hand
of saint to saint—
that he might risk his soul in the streets,
where the things given
are only next to last;
in God's name cheating, pretending,
playing the double agent,
choosing to trade
the prayer for the deed,
and the deed most vile.
I am a liar and a traitor.

THE EXTERMINATION CAMP

Through the half-open door of the hut
the camp doctor saw him kneeling,
with his hands quietly folded.
"I was most deeply moved by the way
this lovable man prayed,
so devout and so certain
that God heard his prayer."
Round-faced, bespectacled, mild,
candid with costly grace,
he walked toward the gallows
and did not falter.
Oh, but he knew the Hangman!
Only a few steps more
and he would enter the arcanum
where the Master
would take him by the shoulder,
as He does at each encounter,
and turn him round
to face his brothers in the world.



Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor and theologian whose Christian conscience forced him, against the pacific temper of his spirit, to accept the necessity of political activism and to join in a conspiracy for the murder of Hitler. The plot failed, and he was arrested by the Gestapo (1943). On April 9, 1945, he was hanged at Flossenburg extermination camp. His brother Klaus and two brothers-in-law were also destroyed. Some of the details of the poem have their source in Bonhoeffer's two posthumous publications, *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Letters and Papers from Prison*, and in the definitive biography by his disciple Eberhard Bethge.—S.K.

THE TOP BEATS THE BOTTOM

Carl Perkins and his music

by Michael Lydon



Seems like I could hardly wait til the day that I got
grown,
I wanted to pull out of those cotton fields, wanted to get
out on my own,
There's a whole lot about this big world I didn't know,
Seems like every place I turn I still got a row to hoe.

I got tired pickin' that cotton,
I got tired balin' that hay,
I got tired diggin' those taters,
I got tired workin' that way.

—"I Got Tired" by Carl Perkins

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"If it weren't for the rocks in its bed, the stream would have no song," said Carl Perkins with a comic dolefulness. He had just put down his well-thumbed copy of *The Power of Positive Thinking* and was staring out at the brown miles of Texas prairie that slipped unchanging past the Dodge mobile-home bus.

Carl, thirty-seven, his extensive bald spot covered by a rakish toupee, and his front teeth rebuilt with a plate, was on tour with the Johnny Cash Spectacular. He's been working with Cash for four years now, sometimes playing lead guitar with John, and always opening the show with twenty minutes of up-tempo pickin' and singin' to warm up the country crowds. He doesn't exactly have the "how the mighty are fallen" blues—his own days at the top were too brief, and steady work with the biggest country and western tour in the business isn't the bottom—but Carl has had his share of vicissitudes, and they've made him philosophical.

"I'll tell you true," he said that sleepy afternoon as the bus rolled from Lubbock to El Paso, "I've been at the top of the bill and now I'm at the bottom, and there's no comparing 'em. The top'll beat the bottom every time. At the top you know the people came for you. At the bottom you're just somebody between the crowd and what they came for, and you gotta work real hard out there to make it seem worth it to yourself."

He got up to check why the new plastic top for his dune buggy was rattling. He was nervous about it not only because it was his pride and joy, but because Johnny had at first made him keep it outside lashed above the spare tire. Now Carl was sure Johnny would make him take it out again. He stopped the rattle with some wedged newspaper and slouched back into his seat.

"Oh, Carl, don't be blue," said honey-blond and honey-voiced June Carter Cash. "Why, you know the people all enjoy hearing you. You're an indispensable part of this show— isn't he, John?"

"Sure is," said Johnny Cash, folding his sex-adventure paperback over his gut and edging his voice with mock sarcasm, "I don't know what we'd do without you, Rock King."

"Laugh," said Carl, "but that's what they called

me, and that's what some still call me, the King of Rock 'n' Roll."

They all—John and June, bass player Marshall Grant at the wheel, and drummer W. S. "Fluke" Holland beside him—laughed and hollered. Carl went ostentatiously back to his book. He is a natural-born straight man, his humble pride is his comic device. He reads *Positive Thinking* seriously, but it's like Mr. Peepers reading Charles Atlas. Yet he is never pathetic. "We all love Carl," June said that evening. "He's been through some hard times, but they've never soured him. Think what it means for a man who was number one to be working behind an old friend. Carl can do it because he's a big man."

* * *

Carl Perkins, author of "Blue Suede Shoes," is today, if not an unknown, an unheard. DJ's with great golden oldie collections draw regretful blanks looking for his singles, and some of the rock fans are sure he's dead. Others remember "Blue Suede Shoes" only as a big hit for Elvis Presley. That it was—the opening track of his first LP—but the Pelvis' cover version is only one of the tributes to Carl's genius embedded in rock 'n' roll history. Bob Dylan has said that his very first record, done for an obscure label in Minnesota, was Carl's "Matchbox." BSS became a must song for every struggling rock band in the world: John Lennon, playing live for the first time with the Plastic Ono Band, announced that they would play only songs they knew because they hadn't rehearsed anything, and then he and Eric Clapton swung immediately into "One for the money, Two for the show, Three to get ready, now, go, cat, go!" George Harrison, who later sat at the feet of Ravi Shankar, first idolized Carl's guitar, and the Beatles in their early days recorded three of his songs—"Matchbox," "Everybody's Trying to Be My Baby," and "Honey Don't"—more than those of any other songwriter.

"Blue Suede Shoes" was the fourth song that Carl Perkins recorded, his first hit, and his greatest song. It's still his closing number, and though a hunting accident which shattered his left foot has cut his once hot-footed dancing down to little hops, he still brings the song to rollicking life. "You can burn my house," he sings, standing in a fifties drug-store hood pose,

Steal my car,
Drink my liquor from an old fruit jar,
Do anything you want to do.
But uh-huh honey, lay off a them shoes,
Don't you,
Step on my blue suede shoes.
You can do anything,
But lay off a them blue suede shoes!

It was a song that showed the way. With a great dancing beat, clean and snappy guitar, and funny-serious lyrics, it set rock's "teen feel" pattern of

defiant and narcissistic self-assertion. Songs like "Blue Suede Shoes" literally created the Fifties Teen-ager; the hoods in their leather jackets and muscle T-shirts, who had dice hanging from the mirrors of their chopped, blocked, and dropped '51 Fords, who spent hours to get that Sal Mineo curl in their DA's and Saturday afternoons at the picture show catching Marlon in *The Wild One*—they all loved "Blue Suede Shoes." Some radio stations played it for whole afternoons, and the millions of kids who heard it were suddenly linked and could say, "This song is us, and what we wanna say is: lay off our blue suede shoes, daddy-o."

Carl achieved that by singing and playing his own blues, the songs of a poor white kid from Tennessee growing up into the hope of the fifties from the grinding poverty of the thirties and war years. Carl and his comrades, punk kids then just like their fans, didn't have a chance to get into the big company studios in Nashville, so they went down to Memphis and Sam Phillip's Sun Records, almost exclusively a blues label until they arrived. That in itself was a minor revolution: a new generation of white country singers finding a "nigger" label their natural home. They revolutionized Sun until the Nashville companies (in fact regional offices of New York-based firms) woke up and started buying them away from Phillip's, who was never quite able to make the adjustment to the big time.

Carl never made it as big as the others; except for the few months before Elvis became an international phenomenon, he has lived his professional life in the shadow of the other country boys who had a little more polish and a lot more luck. But perhaps because of that, Carl's story tells more than the others, and one afternoon in a New York motel, as he sipped coffee and cracked his knuckles, he told it to me. It went something like this:

* * *

As far back as memory takes me, music is there. Before I went to school, I started fooling around on a guitar. My daddy made me one with a cigar box, a broomstick, and two strands of baling wire, and I'd sit and beat on that thing. My first real one a colored man gave me when I was five. See, I was raised on a plantation in the flatlands of Lake County, Tennessee, and we were the only white people on it. I played with colored kids, played football with old socks stuffed with sand. When you work in the cotton fields in the sun, music is the only escape. The colored people would sing, and I'd join in, just a little kid, and that was colored rhythm and blues, got named rock 'n' roll, got named that in 1956, but the same music was there years before, and it was my music.

First day I went to school, I refused to go unless I could take my guitar. The teacher said, "We came to learn, not play, but now you brought it, so play."

I got up and played "Home on the Range." I played in every class skit after that. Why, I was on the radio when I was in the fourth grade; Miss Lee, my teacher, took me the seventy miles to Jackson to WTJS. I sang two songs, "Home on the Range" and "Billy Boy."

We lived in Tiptonville, and my daddy was a sharecropper. The night I was born my mom lay on a bed with no doctor but a granny lady named Mary. My daddy had double pneumonia on the next bed and almost died. He was always in bad health after that, later had a lung removed. They wouldn't give him good land on account of his health, but he did all he could. I had two brothers, Jay, two years older, and Clayton, two younger.

I was the poorest white boy in my school. There's a story from that time that still bothers me. (Y'know, some things happen you never forget, and then you realize why people have bad dreams and hatreds deep inside. So you *can't* let 'em happen to your own kids.) I was in the fourth grade. One day there was a big pasteboard box by Miss Lee's desk. Kids were putting clothes in it. At close of school she called me to stay behind. I was afraid I had done something wrong. (See, I tried to be a good boy. I would have stole, but Mom's faith brought us through trouble. In my mom I figure I have something some boys don't never get.)

Miss Lee said, "I don't want to make you feel bad, but it's a hard winter, and your clothes are thin, and the other boys gave you this." I looked through the box and saw these corduroy pants. I had never had any. I was wearing them a week later playing football with a kid. He came at me and it was my job to tackle him. I threw him pretty hard. He said, "You tackle me like that again, and I'll take back those britches." That stuck with me, and I said to myself, "With health and the good Lord's help, I'll never be like that again, to have to be good to somebody so he won't take his britches back."

Went barefoot in the summer, we had to. No electricity. We had a radio, and every fall we'd get a battery—we bought everything in the fall. I'd listen to the Grand Ole Opry, Saturdays we'd stay up to 9 o'clock and listen. I remember how sad I'd get when the battery started to fade, it would last about three months, so then I'd stay over with friends to hear the radio. White music, I liked Bill Monroe, his fast stuff; for colored, I liked John Lee Hooker, Muddy Waters, their electric stuff. Even back then I liked to do Hooker songs Bill Monroe style, blues with a country beat.

When I was fourteen we all moved to Jackson to get better land, because us boys were grown, and we got taken off welfare, got a good farm to share-

crop. I quit school after eighth grade, cause I knew if I didn't go to school, we could make a good living. Jay and I worked, and Clayton helped. In Jackson things were better. Four rooms, good roof, and we realized something from the crop.

That year I got my very first really good guitar. I went to a store and said I had no money but had a good cotton crop and would pay in the fall. That fellow's told me since he saw the honesty in my face and couldn't let me down. I got a \$150 Les Paul, the one I cut my first record with. A friend of mine had an amplifier, and he lent that to me. When I paid Mr. Towater, that was his name, for the guitar, I got me a Gibson amp and then paid for that the next year.

The man who taught me guitar was an old colored man, I can see him now, sitting on his porch. He taught me in Lake County. I'd ask him in the field, "Uncle John, you gonna play tonight?" "Maybe, if my back ain't too tired," he'd say. My daddy'd let me go over for an hour. Uncle John'd get his old guitar out and fill a pot with oily rags, then light it to make a smoke screen to keep the mosquitoes away. John Westbrook was his name, the champion cotton picker on the plantation. He taught me how to pick cotton too. I could pick 300 pounds a day, and man, that's grabbin'. He said, start at the bottom of the plant and move up, said it was all the rhythm, keeping all your movements smooth, and starting from the bottom, you could see all the bolls as you moved up.

Other than John nobody taught me. If there was a song I liked, I'd try to catch some of the feel of it. I had a good memory for songs and was good at figuring how to get something off the radio onto the neck of my guitar.

And last year, you know what happened? I got a reception in Jackson, came in on a plane, and there were 2000 people standing in the rain. I thought maybe the governor was on the plane, but I saw my family and knew it was for me. They had Carl Perkins Week, five days playing all my songs on the radio, and at a banquet at Lambeth College, they played my life from beginning to end, had people from my whole life. They had dug up an old pair of blue suede shoes and bronzed 'em on a plaque. The theme was "Blue Suede Turned To Gold." It was a night I'll never forget. They asked for a speech, and I had nothing planned, but I said this: "My mother taught me as a boy that love among people is the strongest asset the world has ever known. Tonight I've learned what true love really is. Jackson, Tennessee, chose me of all its people to bestow this great honor upon. If only I can live up to be the man you think me to be, I shall not die in vain." Then I started crying and couldn't say any more.

But I never would have made it without Valda. Valda's the baby of her family, and she is a fine understanding woman. A lot of men say this about their women, but if every man had a woman like

Michael Lydon is a young music critic and reporter, who lives on the West Coast. His book, *Rock Folk*, from which this article is adapted, will be published in January by Dial.



The Sour Virgin: worth waiting for.

Here at last, a taste that generations of true rum lovers have searched for. A tart delicious cooler you'll never forget.

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Virgin Rum and Party Tyme Mix.

I have, we'd have a lot better men. Back when I was working at the Colonial Bakery, she said I'd make it, when we had nothing on the table. She'd always say I was the best in the whole world. Even when alcohol took hold of me and I stayed drunk for ten years, she stayed with me. She gave me four beautiful children; she doesn't even drive a car, she stays home. Not the woman for everybody, but when I come home, I *stay* home. I could never say enough about Valda. Anyone who knows me knows my woman. They'll all tell you, "Carl's got one of the greatest little women ever lived." Roger Miller, Roy Orbison, Johnny Cash—they all stop, and she never gets excited. "You all will stay for supper, won't you," she says, and she knows how to cook. She cooks biscuits for breakfast; there's no toast in my house. The boys love to sop up the gravy with them. She's a good country girl, Valda.

Lived on the Jackson farm for two years, till I was sixteen, but farming is always uncertain, so I and Jay decided we could do better if we worked at public work—that's what farmers called jobs. I worked in a flashlight battery place, two years on the night shift, but I had taught Jay how to play rhythm on an acoustic, and by then Clayton had learned bass fiddle, and so we became the Perkins Brothers Band, played weekends in honky-tonks, dodging beer bottles. First when they started fighting, we'd play extra loud, then we'd start running out through windows. Rough, man, rough—I saw a lot of blood in those places, working two, three nights a week.

I met Valda then, and would have married her right away, but I couldn't support her, cause I was supporting Mom and Daddy, so I went with her four years. I married her Saturday, January 24, 1952, and on Monday I was laid off my job. We moved in with my folks in Hickstown, the slum part of Jackson, had one room. Valda's money bought a bedroom suite. With her encouraging me, I decided to try and make my living singing, so I started taking jobs every night in the honky-tonks. After a year Valda wanted her own home, so I gave \$50 on credit for a dining room suite, and we moved into a government project, Parkview Courts it was called, two rooms up, two down, concrete floors, and not even a window fan. It'd get so hot in there at night that I'd take water and sprinkle it on the bed. I was averaging \$30 a week then.

By 1955 I had sent tapes out. A guy there in Parkview, name of Curly Griffin, had a tape recorder. He was blind, Curly. And Fluke, that's W. S. Holland, came in then too. He used to come with me and Jay and Clayton to jobs and hit his bare hands on Clayton's bass, that was his drum. He was delivering coal then. Jay was living at Parkview too. So anyway, I made a tape in 1955 and sent it to Sun. I had sent tapes to RCA and Columbia and had never heard a thing from 'em. I had sent them to addresses from songbooks, like to "Columbia Rec-

ords, New York City," and no other address. I called Sam Phillipps two weeks later and he said, "I ain't heard it and I'm taking no auditions. I got this new boy Elvis and he's fixin' to be hot, and I can't handle any more."

I said, "Mr. Phillipps, I hope someday you do hear us." Elvis had just come out with a song, "That's Alright, Mama," and it was exactly the type of thing I was playing. I *knew* it would be the big time for us if Sam could hear us. Elvis, he came from the same environment as me, though not as poor, and he told me later that he had come up to Jackson and seen us one night at the El Rancho. His manager then, Bob Neal, a big DJ at WMPS in Memphis, had seen us too.

So I felt I had a real chance and decided Sam Phillipps was gonna hear us one way or another. A month after that, I still couldn't get over hearing the Elvis record. W. S. had a car good enough to go to Memphis, mine was a '40 Plymouth with bad tires, and we drove down to Memphis and just walked in. A secretary was saying Sam wasn't there. I said, "I'm Carl Perkins from Jackson, sir," and he said, "No, boy, I'm not taking nobody." I said, "Just ten minutes," and he said OK. I did "Turn Around" for him and he liked that. Then I did some fast things, and he said that was too much like Elvis, but he liked the country material.

He recorded "Turn Around" that day and we went home. Two months went by, and I kept the radio on all the time to hear it. Sam had said it would be out in a week. Then one day I was listening to Bob Neal, and he said, "We got a new song by a new artist, Carl Perkins." Valda, she dropped the baby, and I like to fainted. After that I put out "Let the Jukebox Keep on Playing" and "Gone Gone, Gone," and then Sam sold Elvis and he said I could record the stuff I liked to do. So on December 17, 1955, I wrote "Blue Suede Shoes." I recorded it on December 19, and it was released on January 1, 1956.

Funny thing, it was "Honey Don't" on the back side that broke first in Memphis. Then one day the lady across the street came over and said there was a long-distance call for me. It was Sam and he said, "Carl, you know what happened? You got a hit on 'Blue Suede Shoes.' Chicago has ordered 25,000. When they said that I thought they said 2500. Never had an order so big."

So it was all happening. Then on March 22, 1956, we were on our way to do the *Perry Como Show* Saturday in New York, then *Ed Sullivan* Sunday. David Stewart, our manager and a Memphis DJ, was driving. We had played in Norfolk, Virginia, on Wednesday and were supposed to be in New York Thursday. We were near Dover, Delaware, about six thirty in the morning. Dave was getting sleepy, was going to wake someone soon. Me and Jay were in the back seat stretched out asleep. I remember the Chesapeake Bay Ferry, and it's the last thing I re-

member for three days. We crashed. I broke my right shoulder in three places and four ribs and was in traction for eight days with sixteen pounds of lead to pull my neck out. Clayton and W. S. were beside my bed when I woke up in the Dover hospital. I asked what had happened, then fell back asleep, but I heard a guy in the room say one of us was killed. I started screaming for a nurse, thinking Jay had died. She said Jay was alive, but our car had killed a man in a pickup we had hit, but I kept bothering her to get me moved into his room. I remember when I got moved in and saw Jay, he was asleep. I lay there watching him and waiting, and when he woke up and opened his eyes, man, we were happy boys.

"Blue Suede Shoes" was the big song in the nation then, and we were getting hundreds of letters a day telling us to get well. Valda was expecting our third child, so I talked the doctor into letting me go back home to be with my woman. And there I was one night when Elvis was on the *Jackie Gleason Show*. He came on and said, "I want to do my new record." And he sang, "One for the money . . ." I near fell out of bed. It was "Blue Suede Shoes"!

But anyway, Elvis had the looks on me. The girls were going for him for more reasons than music. Elvis was hittin' 'em with sideburns, flashy clothes, and no ring on that finger. I had three kids. There was no way of keeping Elvis from being *the* man in that music. I've never felt bitter, always felt lucky being in the music business at all. Most kids from my background never drive a new car.

I started working again in September because the money was good. Jay didn't come back at first, then did for a few months, but he never really got over the wreck. He lived until October 22, 1958. Started getting headaches the January before then, then lost control of his left side. Was dying for ten months, Jay was. The last four months I quit working to be with him, took him fishing, stayed with him in general. He died holding my hand, working his mouth. I don't know what he was trying to say. Gave me his boat motor, gave Clayton his guitar. Said he'd be waitin' on us. I walk out to his grave and talk to him in my own way. Sometimes on stage I hear him say, "You're doing great. Jump, Carl, jump, you got 'em jumpin'!" It was Jay and me, we were closer than me and Clayton. Clayton was the baby, but me and Jay were inseparable. Jay was big and strong. Nobody laughed at him but one time, but he was liked by everybody who ever knew him, the type of man I've strived to be.

I didn't do any work until the early part of 1959. I had spent all my money on hospital bills, and I had to go back. Then it got hard. See, I had started drinking in those honky-tonks, people would set beers up on the stage saying, "Give that Perkins boy some beer, he'll make that guitar talk." By 1959 I was drinking heavy. When you're a country boy

just months from the plow, and suddenly you're a star with money in your pockets, cars, women, cities, crowds, the change is too fast. You're the same person inside, but you're a star outside, so you don't know how to act. You're embarrassed about the way you talk, the way you eat, the way you look. You can't take the strain without a crutch. For me it was booze—I've seen the bottom of a lot of bottles.

I'd be sitting in a hotel room before going on, start thinking about Jay and how he wasn't there to be with me, and I'd get real high. I had to have it, would give \$50 for a pint. Early Times was my drink, but I'd take anything. I just floated around. Left Sam in 1959, it seemed everybody was leaving Sun, cause it was the dream of an artist to be on a big label. I took a chance to go with Columbia, then over there I got lost in the shuffle. On Sun I would have got more attention. I recorded regularly, but nothing would happen; good reviews but no sales. Started touring on my own, playing the Las Vegas circuit. Clayton, he was drinking heavy too, and we busted up in 1963, cause alcohol was making troubles.

When we busted up, I decided to quit, quit the whole business. I just stayed at home. But then we needed money, so I started work as a single, playing with anybody. I got booked on a tour—four weeks in England, me and Chuck Berry, the Animals, and the Nashville Teens. When I stepped off the plane and saw signs, "Welcome Carl Perkins, King of Rock," I said, "Lookee here, Carl, you got a place in the music business." Chuck had never been over there either, and we packed the places. The kids went out of their minds, and I felt like a star. I started lightening up on the bottle, came home, and decided I was gonna make it as big as anybody.

That first trip was in 1964, the fall, and I went back two times in '65 as a headliner, star of my own show. Bad luck again late that year—shot up my foot out hunting and was out of work for months. Then one day in January, 1966, a big bus pulled up in front of my house, and a big-lookin' guy came up our walk. Valda called to me, "That's Johnny Cash coming up, Carl." I hadn't seen him for three, maybe four years.

"I want you to come with me up to Nashville to play on a record," he said, and I went. Then up there he said, "I'm going to Chattanooga, Carl, and I want you to open the show," and since then I've been on every show. I'm in to stay, I'll never leave Johnny. He was my strength. It was his hand I shook and said I'd never touch the bottle again.

Johnny grew up across the river from me, and the same '37 flood he sings about in "How High the Water, Mama" ran out over the flatlands on my side too. John and me, the similarities between us are amazing. The first real show we were on together was the first for both of us. Bob Neal booked it, and it was at Marianna, Arkansas, on a

flatbed truck on a football field, thirty-five people there, and he scared to death and so was I. One time we sat down and wrote comparisons. He's got a lot of the same scars, he lost his brother Jack, he was hooked on pills like me on the bottle, and we got off 'em at the same time. The likenesses went on till they got so spooky we stopped comparing.

We worked with Elvis a lot, playing these little schoolyards around Arkansas and Mississippi, and I could tell you things you wouldn't believe. Back in those days, me and my two brothers and W. S., well, we were so good Elvis didn't dare go on after us. Me and my guitar playing beat his ass every time. He hadn't hit as a sex symbol then. One time in Amory, Mississippi, Johnny Cash opened the show. I was second, and they kept calling me back till I was exhausted. Elvis went on and the place emptied. A long time later, after "Blue Suede Shoes," Colonel Parker wanted to book us together, and Elvis said, "I won't do it." He hadn't forgot.

No, I had no idea what we were doing down there, that music, that it would be so big. It was something to have it accepted. Like when you get a gold record, you feel you've arrived at the place you wanted to be, not down below anyone anymore. I still have mine at home, and I still look at it. But I don't want to be the biggest thing in the business. I want to cut records, and sell, but I want to live my life, and you can't do that when you're number one. I want to be somewhere *down* on the ladder, but *on* the ladder.

My four children, they're Stanley, he's sixteen. I just bought him a SX Super Sport Oldsmobile. I remember when I was sixteen I got a second-hand bicycle, and I feel like trying to make up for a few things I didn't get. Valda and I talked it over. I thought, "Maybe in a few years I'll lose him to the Army," so we figured that if we treat him like a man, maybe he'll be one. He plays drums and has a little group that's real good. Debby, she's fifteen, and she plays organ; Stevie, thirteen, he's all sports, a baseball fan; but eleven-year-old Greg, he's been playing electric bass for two years and he can go! I got a room set up so we just have to flip a few switches and we can play. We make close family music. Valda plays fine piano too.

And I write songs still. I listen to practically everything people say to me and what they say to others, listening for sayings or ideas, and if there's one that stays in my mind, well, I'll be in a dressing room or at home, my guitar in my hand, and the music and words come out together. A good song, one that sells, is one that the mass of people can associate with, that says something they've felt. Or it reminds them of their childhood, or says something they'd like to do or be. The more people you can reach with your song, the better song it is, and the more likely you'll sell. A combination of good material and a lot of luck, that's what makes a song a hit, and a singer and picker a star.

The bus rolled on through Texas, El Paso still two hours away. The prairie was turning a dusty gold at the first beginnings of sunset, and the bus was quiet, Carl back at his Norman Vincent Peale, the others staring out the windows. Carl says he hates the road. "People'll tell you how great it is, but I won't. I do it cause I have to. All I'm hoping for in the world is to get to where I can close the case on that Epiphone guitar and not open it until I want to open it."

But they are all good old boys to their bones, and they have a fine time. The Cash Spectacular (which also includes the Carter Family—Mother Maybell and her daughters Anita, Helen, and June—and the Statler Brothers) tours ten to fifteen days a month. Carl, W. S., and Marshall triple up in motel rooms to save money, but otherwise it's comfortable traveling. They talk about the old days, Elvis ("He had a project to see how many girls he could make. He did OK," said Johnny), and sing Jimmy Rogers' songs, cracking up on each yodel; they exchange Nashville gossip, swap car and boat info, and tell jokes ("Hear about the girl who said, 'Give me nine inches and hurt me,'" said Carl. "So the guy screwed her three times and punched her in the mouth.")

Carl's only real problem is homesickness; three days on the road and he's moaning about his "poor old Valda," and how he can't stand being without her. He broke the silence that afternoon with just such a moan, like the howling of a Tennessee hound, that made everyone jump.

"Ooooh, where are you Valda?" he cried. "D'y'know, when I call Valda, I make sure I'm at a window where I can see the moon. When I talk to her, I say, 'Valda, can you see that moon?' and she says, 'Yes, I can, Carl, it's beautiful, isn't it?' and I say, 'Sure is, Valda,' and then our loves goes from each of us, to the moon, and then to the other."

He misses his children almost as much as Valda. When he's away they often stay at his father's farm, and Carl is glad they're learning country ways. "I think the happiest time in my life was when I was a little boy in the country in the summer. Then I thought time was standing still and the world was mine." But he's finally getting things set up for Valda and the kids. They've just moved into a new house, and with Carl's drinking days behind him, they're piling up a nest egg. Johnny Cash's TV show has given him national exposure, his Sun records have been re-released, and Columbia has put out an LP of his biggest hits.

"It's all in how you look at things," Carl finished, picking up *Positive Thinking* again. "I figure I went from low to high to low to just about right in the middle. That's an advance, isn't it, and maybe now I'm inching forward again."

"Poor ole Carl," said June, batting her long lashes and grinning warmly. □

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You may know and respect us as the reliable manufacturer of Kodak photographic goods and Kodel fiber for apparel and home furnishings. Another accomplishment is worth mentioning: we have organized ourselves in such a way as to provide 113,000 people with something to do after breakfast, along with attractive, regular cash rewards for giving their attention.

Rather few of us 113,000 spend our working hours thinking beautiful patterns of thought. The rest of us live by a more literal concept of work. Of our many thousands of products and services, not many flow in such majestic torrents that the only human help possible must come from the brain's top-most centers. Some of us—archaic though it may seem—are actually paid to use our hands, eyes, and feet. This in turn provides employment for 15 of us drawn from the disciplines

of engineering, medicine, psychology, and physiology to grapple with such questions as:

- Despite appearances, are some jobs too taxing to the body or the human spirit to do day-in and day-out?
- Despite appearances, which jobs are insufficiently taxing to keep the jobholder vigilant?
- How would workers benefit by variations in work methods, changes in rest periods, or job rotation?
- What kind of tests would best match people to difficult jobs?
- Where can redesign of equipment and work environment help productivity and quality through worker comfort?
- How much should production workers and inspectors know about the use of the product?
- How can these human-factors studies guide design of the products to help the humans who use them?

Could be that general satisfaction with our products and services is traceable to some good answers.



Is it true that irregularity in foot-tapping indicates psychomotor stress?



What kind of window glass in the work-break rooms of our new film manufacturing plant on the Front Range of the Rockies will least affect ability of the eyes to readjust to the darkroom after break?

MESSAGE

Like the rest of you, I have been watching the Revolution on television. Every morning, as I bring the coffee cup to my lips, I see through the rising steam their millions marching. Apparently I am no longer President. I do not recall being notified officially, but now I find myself in a large desert compound with no aides, no maps, no generals. Two soldiers of indeterminate uniform stand at the gate. They do not answer questions, nor do they hinder my movements.

In some respects, to have lost the power is reassuring. But the presidency is like a hat, which can be removed from the head, yet the sensation remains. My fingers itch occasionally for the touch of the red telephone; still, returned to power, I would not be certain how to proceed. Your revolutionist is clever. Given his faulty equipment, poor training, overextended supply lines, his effort should have died meagerly some years ago; yet I switch on my set to see our boys, dropped fresh from helicopters, mowed down like summer grass. Where is the energy? It is all theirs.

Yesterday there was captured footage showing their troops gathered on the edges of rivers to sing their haunting, incomprehensible songs. Forces have massed on the Elbe, the Platte, the Parana, the Chattahoochee, the Ganges, and the Yalu. I am told their children obey them. In what way are they not superior to us? True, their literature is defective, their newspapers blotchy and poorly laid out. They lack subtlety, but this is not clearly a flaw: it has not gone well with us, over the centuries.

I set out to be President because I was convinced that we would flower in my time. The office itself did not excite me; only the possibility of touching the hands of millions. The faces were like fields of sunflowers, each tilted expectantly my way, piercing me with similar, melting eyes. I thought their lives would be different because of me.

Now there are more revolutionists. Perhaps they are reproducing, or others joining them secretly. The millions who voted for me have grown restive. On the street they avoid me; confronted directly, they mutter and avert their eyes. They too are coming to resemble the revolutionists, with their shaggy eyebrows, high cheekbones, hunched stature. Is a new race emerging? Is it better?

The revolutionists will not omit to detail the failures of my Administration: to them I leave that dismal task. I am told that even now a committee of poets is framing an epic of their triumph. Under the circumstances it seems unlikely that, my fence penetrated and my person dissolved, they would bother to preserve this document. But I want it known that I meant well by all of you.

Here I wither slowly. To keep fit for the exercise of power, I maintain a planetarium. During lunch, taken at the console, I twist knobs to control the motions of a reflected universe: if I wish a comet, a comet will appear and maneuver for my pleasure. In the evening, I drive rapidly over the desert, dispersing herds of antelope and deer.

by Jean Goldschmidt

Jean Goldschmidt, whose "Letter to the Mayor" appeared in the February *Atlantic*, is a free-lance writer based in New York.

LIFE AND LETTERS

A DOUBLE LIFE, HALF TOLD

by Malcolm Cowley

ISLANDS IN THE STREAM
by Ernest Hemingway
Scribner's, \$10.00

When Ernest Hemingway came back from the wars for the last time, in March, 1945, he was the most famous writer in the world, and he had chosen—or the public had chosen for him—the most difficult problem he could bring himself to face. He must write a novel about World War II that should be bigger in every way than *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. For this he had more than enough material, all gathered at firsthand. There were obstacles to the writing, however, of which the public had no conception.

In the beginning the worst obstacle was both physical and mental. Hemingway was always taking risks, always getting knocked on the head, and during the war he had suffered two serious concussions. One of these, in a London blackout, also involved a scalp wound that had to be closed with fifty-seven stitches. Back in Cuba, Hemingway complained to his physician, Dr. José Luis Herrera, about the aftereffects: "terrible headaches, slowness of thought and speech, loss of verbal memory, a tendency to write syllables backwards, sporadic ringing of the ears, and partial impairment of hearing." Herrera said, according to Hemingway's biographer Carlos Baker, that the liquor Ernest had drunk in France and in Belgium was the worst possible treatment for subdural hematoma. He advised gradual retraining of the injured

brain, with limited intellectual activity each day.

For some months Hemingway severely restricted his drinking. He devised a literary program for himself: to get back into the swing of writing, first with personal letters, then with more and more complicated fictions.

Gradually the symptoms disappeared, but they were replaced in the course of time by other obstacles to producing a big novel. One of these was his still growing fame, which crowded the Finca Vigía with editors, interviewers, assorted notabilities, and jolly drinking companions. Another was his restless vitality, which drove him farther and farther afield on expeditions that consumed his time and exposed him to the danger of new accidents. The two airplane crashes in East Africa, early in 1954, not only revived his old symptoms, with complications such as double vision, but gave him internal injuries from which he never quite recovered. On his return to the Finca, however, he reestablished the discipline of writing every morning.

One is astonished to learn how much patient work he accomplished in spite of those obstacles and others. Besides the two novels he published after the war, and besides a quantity of shorter pieces, some unprinted, there are also five book-length manuscripts that he left behind him. The shortest of these was *A Moveable Feast*, which was more or less ready for publication and appeared in due time. Three others—*The Garden of*

Eden, a novel about a strange honeymoon in the south of France; *The Dangerous Summer*, about Hemingway's travels with a famous matador; and a half-factual, half-fictional account of the disastrous safari—were in such an inchoate state that they may never appear. In *The Garden of Eden*, however, are two extraordinary stories that I hope can be printed separately. The longest and by all means the best of the manuscripts was the one that Hemingway's friends, without having read it, used to call "the sea novel" and that now appears as *Islands in the Stream*.

The manuscript has a complicated history. While following the American armies in France, and sometimes going before them, Hemingway had conceived of writing a trilogy about the war, with one volume each devoted to sea, air, and land. The sea novel was to come first, but it would seem—Ernest was secretive about what he was writing—that he didn't start work on it until late in 1947; then he continued at intervals until 1952. Gradually his conception of the book changed; instead of his writing it as a continuous novel, it was to be a collection of three long stories—or perhaps four; there was a time when he thought that *The Old Man and the Sea*, written in January and February, 1951, might serve as a coda to the book. But wisely he decided to publish it as a separate volume, and then, after further revision of the other three stories, he declared that they were finished and put them into a bank vault in Havana.

December Report On

Atlantic Monthly Press books



In 1961, Robert Coles wrote his first article for the *Atlantic*. It was titled "A Young Psychiatrist Looks at His Profession." Since then, Dr. Coles has published over three hundred articles. Many of them, like the first, questioned the humanity and compassion of American psychiatric dogma. In 1968, the first volume of his monumental study of the American poor, *Children of Crisis* (for which we had earlier awarded Dr. Coles an Atlantic Grant), won the Ralph Waldo Emerson Award of Phi Beta Kappa, the Four Freedoms Award, the Anisfield-Wolf Award, and the Hofheimer Prize of the American Psychiatric Association.

ERIK H. ERIKSON: THE GROWTH OF HIS WORK surpasses even our expectations for Robert Coles's next major book. It grows out of a long intellectual and personal affinity between author and subject. For the first time, Erikson's wide-ranging thought is assessed and integrated with the events and aspirations of his life. Such concepts as "identity crisis" and "moratorium," currently on the lips of many college students, are here explained and evaluated with sympathy and admiration.

Among those who are concerned with the relationship between the individual and social change, no psychoanalytic thinker has exercised more influence in recent years than Erik H. Erikson. We doubt that anyone is better qualified to record and explain the growth of his work and of his influence than Robert Coles.

**ERIK H. ERIKSON:
THE GROWTH OF HIS WORK**

by Robert Coles

\$10.00 at your bookstore

LITTLE, BROWN

They weren't quite finished, however, except as separate stories; if they were to appear as sections of the same novel, some few adjustments would have to be made. Ernest's widow and his publisher, Mary Hemingway and Charles Scribner, finally undertook the task of preparing the book for the printer. Having read most of the original manuscript, I can say with conviction that their decisions have been wise ones: first to publish the stories together; then to make some omissions, the longest of which is an interlude in Florida, good enough in itself, that would have made the book less unified; and finally, to make no other changes except in Ernest's erratic spelling and punctuation. One is delighted to have the book in its present form.

As everyone knows by now, *Islands in the Stream* consists of three episodes in the life of Thomas Hudson, a famous (one gathers) painter with three sons by two marriages, both of which have ended in divorce. In the first and longest episode, Hudson is living alone on the island of Bimini and looking forward to a visit from the sons, who are his closest tie with life. The visit is idyllic, but soon after it ends Hudson is notified by wireless that the two younger sons and their mother have died in a motor accident. The second episode takes place in Havana during the second winter after Pearl Harbor. Hudson has armed his fishing boat as a decoy for German submarines, but the northwest gales have forced him to spend a week ashore. Now he learns that his oldest son has also been killed, flying a Spitfire. He is briefly reconciled with the boy's mother, whom he still adores, but they quarrel again, and Hudson is ordered back to sea. "Get it straight," he says to himself in Hemingway language. "Your boy you lose. Love you lose. Honor has been gone for a long time. Duty you do." In the final episode, which takes place the following summer, Hudson and his non-descript crew are pursuing the well-armed survivors of a bombed U-boat. The Germans have landed at a fishing village, have slaughtered the inhabitants, and then have sailed westward along the coast in two harmless-looking turtle boats. With a prescience that he shares with other Hemingway heroes, Hudson is sure that he will be the first to die when his crew catches up with them, but still he stands on

the bridge, a fair target, and does his duty to the end.

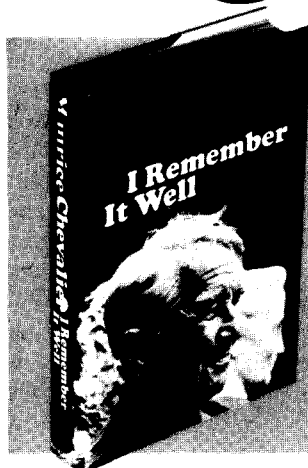
Islands in the Stream is thus an induction to the war novel that Hemingway had planned to write. Except in length, it is not one of his major works, but it is consistently interesting and contains some admirable scenes. There is, for example, Hudson's colloquy with Mr. Bobby, the bartender on Bimini who tells him how to paint an immense picture of the Last Judgment. There is young David Hudson's day-long fight with a giant broadbill. There is Hudson's cat, Boise, lording over the big drafty house near Havana, and there is Hudson drinking at the bar of the Floridita with Honest Lil, the dean and deaconess of all the Havana whores. The sea chase of the final episode should be the best sequence of all, and in fact it demands comparison with the dynamiting of the bridge in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, but it loses by the demand. Hudson's glum sense of duty and his implicit death wish seem pale when placed beside Robert Jordan's tangle of fierce emotions.

The weakness of the book might be that here, as in other works of his later period, Hemingway was unable to make effective use of his subconscious mind. He had always depended on it and often said that a good half of his work was done in the subconscious: "Things have to happen there before they happen on paper." In his early period that use of the subconscious enabled him to produce apparently simple works that have an amazing resonance. He descended to a level of feeling, call it primitive or prehistoric, at which natural objects become symbols without ceasing to be solidly real, and events become archetypes of human experience. As for the Hemingway hero, whether his name was Frederic Henry or Jake Barnes or Robert Jordan, he became the hero of ancient myths. That is, he was marked for admiration and envy, he was cast out by his people (in *A Farewell to Arms*), he wandered impotent through the wasteland (in *The Sun Also Rises*), he found guides and precursors, then finally he re-joined his people (in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*) and died after leading them in a brilliant exploit.

But what would Hemingway do after the hero was dead? How would he resurrect him and present his later career, once again in a mythical pat-

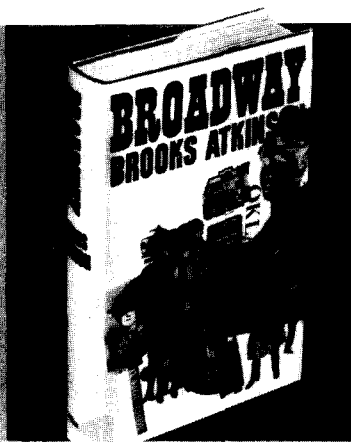
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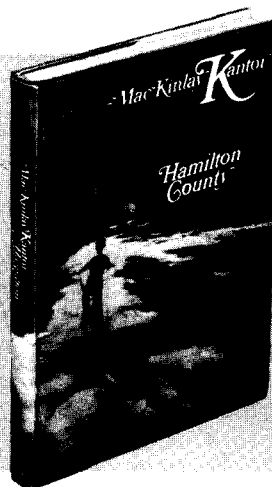
I REMEMBER IT WELL
Maurice Chevalier

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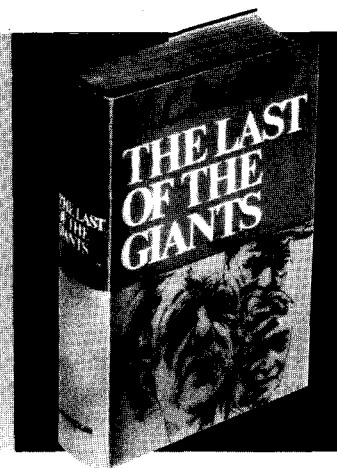
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Brooks Atkinson

The world-famous drama critic with *The New York Times* for over three decades crystallizes 70 years of theater, from Flo’s girls to *Hair’s* boys. Plays, playwrights, stars, directors, producers, theaters, moods, loves, hates. Hundreds of anecdotes and more than 100 illustrations make this glittering chronicle a must for theater buffs and celebrity watchers. \$12.50



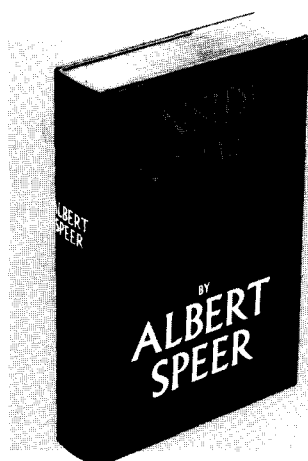
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and Tim Kantor

The Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Andersonville* and his photographer son capture the essence of a vanishing America in ten counties named Hamilton. In eight stories, sketches, anecdotes, reportage, glimpses of history, and 100 photos, they take “a fond look at the heart of America.”—*Life*. “Richly nostalgic.”—*Publishers’ Weekly*. \$9.95



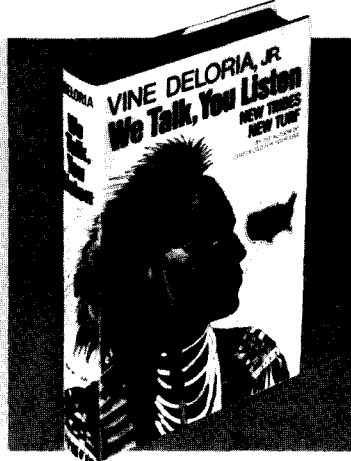
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C. L. Sulzberger

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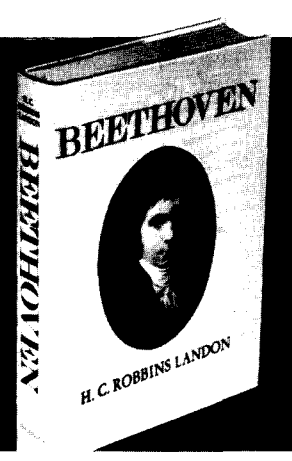
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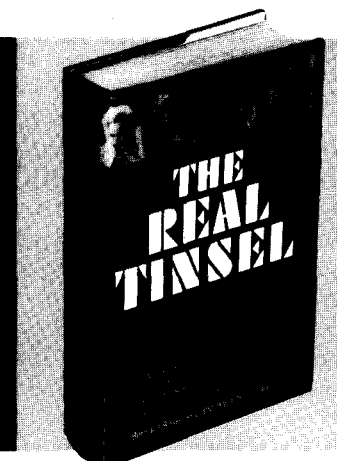
WE TALK, YOU LISTEN
New Tribes, New Turf
Vine Deloria, Jr.

The author of *Custer Died for Your Sins* “describes the thrust of the Red-Power movement . . . peels away layers of tinsel and feathers heaped upon the Indian by misinformed whites (beginning with Columbus), and he reveals an uncanny ability for impaling whites on the fine points of their own illogic.”—*Book World*. \$5.95



BEETHOVEN
H. C. Robbins Landon

“The book for Beethoven admirers” says *Saturday Review Syndicate*. *New York* calls it “handsomely and profusely illustrated . . . a documentary biography, pulling together letters and documents from Beethoven’s time . . . It is far more rewarding to study than any continuous narrative could ever be.” 256 illustrations — 100 in color. \$22.50 until December 31; \$25 thereafter.



THE REAL TINSEL
Bernard Rosenberg
and Harry Silverstein

Hollywood . . . in all its gaudy, grasping, intoxicating, gregarious glory. A fabulous cast of the people who made and make it soar recall the great heydays in a flamboyant panorama. There’s Blanche Sweet on the Gish Sisters and Griffith. Walter Wanger on Bergman and Taylor. Gil Perkins on stunting for “King Kong.” And more. 100 photos. \$9.95

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tern? Those were questions that puzzled me for many years, and only once did they receive a satisfying answer. Of course that was in *The Old Man and the Sea*, where the subconscious once again came to his help and enabled him to write a story with the simplicity and resonance of his early work—with too much simplicity, I thought at first, but the resonance was mysteriously present. Santiago, it seemed to me, was a new archetype, the hero as a hapless but unbroken old man.

Thomas Hudson is not a hero of myth. He is based on Hemingway himself, as most of the other heroes are (except Santiago and Harry Morgan), but in fact he represents only one side of the author: I mean the mask or persona that Hemingway adopted in his relations with the world. Thus, he is brave, competent, wise in a fatherly fashion, and able to hold his liquor—as Hemingway truly was in life—but those qualities in the author were mingled with others that make him an endless study. Hudson gives hardly a hint of having deeper qualities except for a feeling of despair, regarding which the author brings forward a drastic explanation: it was caused, he gives us to understand, by the death of Hudson's three sons. But the reader is likely to feel that the despair is of longer standing, based as it seems to be on the same feeling in the author, and that the sons have served as a blood sacrifice to the exigencies of fiction.

That is the weaker side of *Islands in the Stream*, but one must add that it is a bold, often funny, always swashbuckling book that only Hemingway could have written. It gives one a new respect for the efforts of his later years. Handicapped as he was by injuries and admirers, he continued almost to the end a double life, playing the great man in public—and playing the part superbly—then standing alone at his worktable, humble and persistent, while he tried to summon back his early powers. At the very end he found that he had been too deeply wounded to write even a single sentence after standing there all day. Nevertheless, that private, disciplined, puzzled, and finally despairing self of his now seems more appealing than his brilliant persona. It has a different sort of greatness, in some ways resembling that of his own Santiago.

MEISTERZINGER

by Stefan Kanfer

Thirty-two mind-expanding master-works that make any trip—other than to your neighborhood bookstore—completely unnecessary . . . S. J. Perelman: "Baby, it's Cold Inside" . . . Right on.

—Advertisement in
The New York Times

Had you been reading with Holmesian detachment and Moriartic zeal, you would have noticed a cunning homunculus hanging, mandrill-like, from these lines. Judge-sober, kite-high, and mud-clear, he was one of Nature's noble creatures or, perhaps more accurately, one of Barnes & Noble's nature creatures. A schlemiel-in-itself, with a nose no larger than the prow of the *Statendam*, a voice that shamed the memory of Farinelli, the great Neapolitan *castrato*, and a mustard-keen ability to separate the amateur from the prose, I (for let us dissemble no further, reader) was holding a mirror to the King, parodying the one, the imitable S(idney) J(oseph) Perelman.

Imitable because all masters of the language can be put to the pastiche. It is always the original who attracts the mockingbirds, not the disciple; Auden, not Nemerov; Joyce, not Burgess. Because Perelman is easy to echo he has, I daresay, ruined more undergraduate publications than any other living writer save Murray Kempton. In a political age, Everyosoph is a pamphleteer, and too often he employs the unpolished moral aphorism starting with "we": "We have lived with evil so long that only the very young are unused to it." Source: Columbia wall newspaper. Diagnosis: acute Kempton poisoning.

Never mind the handbills; there are still many aspirants to comedy at the colleges, scribblers who have ransacked *The Most of S. J. Perelman* and who believe that a bilingual pun, a *recherché* celeb, and an inverted trope equal wit. It is like offering a paper bag full of gears and sweep hands and calling it an Accutron; mixing sodium and chlorine (individually lethal) and calling it salt.

I know; I once belonged to that expansion band of student *goniffs*. Perelman designated his favorite brace of lawyers "White-lipped and Trembling." Mine were Cunning and Underhanded. Perelman spotted latent prints of fatuity and composed playlets beneath. I learned to comb the *Times* for headlines like: "Teaching Machine Uses Socratic Method" and composed a camp *Phaedo*. The piece practically wrote itself. Or, rather, Perelman wrote it for me.

He has had an equally vigorous influence on his own host, the *New Yorker*. Tom Meehan's anthologized satire of the Molly Bloom soliloquy in the brain of a movie producer owes its salinity to Perelman. Woody Allen, an irregular in that laugh-parched periodical, has played the sedulous ape each time. Pieces lampooning Kafka parables, Hasidic tales, Mafia books ("death is a serious penalty for Mafia members and many prefer to pay a fine") sometimes look less like freehand copies and more like Xeroxes.

"I think Allen's pieces are among the very few funny writings now published," Perelman tells me. "But I am informed that he submits others so close to my own that the *New Yorker* is forced to reject them." Reject them, one hopes, in favor of the Man. Otherwise, give me a good copy rather than a bad original. And give Perelman a helping of the same. When I asked him who in his view—besides Allen—was writing authentic humor, there was a stillborn silence. Dynasties rose and fell, epochs flourished and were gone, and still he hesitated. At length he reversed the subject: "When I consider how much unfunny writing there is . . . Marvin Kitman, for example. Not that I'm singling him out," said Perelman, singling him out. Kitman has company. Paul Krassner, for one, whose *Realist* assumes that taste and humor vary inversely. Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman for two, whose galvanic impostures have made the pig bladder an object of relative refinement. (For comparison purposes I keep a pig bladder on my desk as

the medieval scholar kept a skull on his.)

Very well then, I asked, "If there are no new humorists in practice, what about solemnists?" Again a wall of silence. Then: "There is a writer. A man I've never met. L. E. Sissman. The poems in *Scattered Returns* strike me as the most memorable I've seen in years. Particularly the one in which the author foresees his end in Massachusetts General Hospital. An indelible work."

That answer is, I think, more indicative of the Perelmanic nature than any of his self-appraisals of the Author as Junkie, hooked on advertising copy and popular art. The acidulous wit, the sworn foe of the gorgons Cant and Sham, the yockmeister nonpareil has been, all these years, one of America's most acute literary appraisers. "I stole," he claims, "from the best. From Benchley and George Ade and Ring Lardner." But from the start he homed in on Joyce and Beerbohm, on Chesterton and Eliot and Edmund Wilson. His work was as lapidary and refined as only a miniaturist's can be; yet it was full of free (and rented) associations and wild allusions. He was a critic not by subject but by example. His skill was prodigious, his learning bottomless. Nathanael West regarded his brother-in-law as "awe inspiring." In his biography, Jay Martin reports that West "always wrote with Perelman in mind as his first audience." E. B. White's admiration is scarcely cooler. "I'm sure Sid's stuff influenced me in the early days," he says. "His pieces usually had a lead sentence, or lead paragraph, that was as hair-raising as the first big dip on a roller coaster; it got you in the stomach and when it was over you were relieved to feel deceleration setting in. In the realm of satire, parody, and burlesque he has bowed to none." Though many have bowed to him. The great Benchley—to whom Perelman dedicated an early volume—once openly fretted, "It was just a matter of time before Perelman took over the dementia praecox field and drove us all to writing articles on economics."

Much has been made of Perelman's contributions to the Marx Brothers' movies, *Monkey Business* and *Horse Feathers*. Too much. As Groucho admitted, George S. Kaufman and Morris Ryskind were better suited



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to the Marxist dialectic. Perelman's screen work was amiable but not signal—and he knew it. The West was films, group art, the external verities. The East was theater, solo work, literacy. Perelman chose East: Bucks County and Greenwich Village. There, appearing regularly in magazines and infrequently in cloth-bound, stage, and celluloid forms, he began to collect rewards for the wrong reasons. His scenario for *Around The World In 80 Days* was a dog-eared joke file in the Jules Vernacular. Perelman won an Oscar for it—though he was shrewd enough not to accept the statuette in person. (Hermione Gingold was his stand-in.) Perelman's play, *The Beauty Part*, was probably the most furiously original American comedy of the 60s—and Bert Lahr's last bow. It opened and closed during the New York newspaper strike. Perelman morosely retired to his web "to spin a few merchandisable threads." Upon the publication of his last book, *Chicken Inspector No. 23*, Perelman became victim to the predictable backlash. *Book Week* fumed: "Style rather than substance . . . Perelman attacks such butts as the Santa Claus business, astrologers, men who wear Burberrys and ladies who are afraid of mice. Ngo Dinh Diem? Never heard of him. Stokely Carmichael? There's nobody here but us chicken inspectors."

The same strained appeals for Relevant Comedy can be crayoned, graffiti-style, on Perelman's newest volume, *Baby it's Cold Inside*. Indeed, his publishers invite put-downs with their fatuous Now promotion, as if the author needed to be pushed on street corners like a drug. In *Baby* there are lambastes of pre-Devlin Dublin, department stores, British snobs, advertising art, television. Or so it seems to the myopic reader. In fact, Perelman must never be examined on surface level, never considered an adjunct of the editorial page, never read for phase value. To be sure, in his new book Perelman can still skewer the poseur: "Thanks to courageous pioneers like Kenneth Tynan, the language of the livery stable has been made available to the humblest"; and the pun remains mightier than the word in a place where "every prospect sneezes and only Mann, the owner, is vile." But throughout, Perelman aims for more

complicated ganglia, more serious comedy. His enthusiasms are for language and its unexplored subtleties. His hates are the result of a moral bias against the cupidity of the accepted poseur and the tolerated inanities of modern life and letters. Like E. M. Forster he is constantly looking for an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate, and the plucky. Like Juvenal, he lives in incessant disappointment and ends by shrugging, "it is difficult *not* to write satire."

For years, Perelman has been accused of repeating himself, of following formulae. But they are *his* formulae. To charge him with writing by the numbers is like accusing Brillat-Savarin of following nothing but recipes. Who else could have composed the *titles* of these thirty-

two feuilletons? "Anna Trivia Pluralized"; "She Walks in Beauty—Single File, Eyes Front and No Hanky-Panky"; "Calling All Moths: Candle Dead Ahead"; "Paint Me a Pinion Immortal, Limner Dear." And the articles beneath them are no less idiosyncratic, or coruscating. All, despite their billing, are volcanic. It is only the author's rage that is icy. So cold, in fact, that at the age of sixty-six he has decided to forsake the United States for London, where he says, irrefutably, "the population is smaller and somewhat more literate." There, Wilkinson-sharp and Gordon-dry, he will continue to chip away at his autobiography, preserve the English language, and elevate taste—and in the process, his appreciators. S. J. Perelman? *Yocks vobiscum*.

UP THE YEARS FROM CASSOULET

by Betty Suyker

MASTERING THE ART OF FRENCH COOKING, Volume Two
by Julia Child and Simone Beck
Knopf, \$12.50

Just about everyone in the United States with even a minor interest in French food has heard of the classic cookbook *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, or has seen on educational television its American co-author, Julia Child, as the French Chef, whacking the wings off a goose or the claws off a lobster with her monstrous big cleaver. But in the gush of articles that followed the book's incredible success and Julia's expanding stardom, considerably less was heard of just what had made the book so great or of Simone Beck, Julia's French counterpart. Now Julia and Simca have finally brought forth their long-awaited *Volume Two*, which is a fine occasion to take a fresh look at them and their work.

Simca combines the openness and warmth of an American with the elegance of a Frenchwoman. She was born in Tocqueville/Caux in Normandy in 1904. Her maternal grandfather was a *négociant en vins et liqueurs* named Alexandre Le Grand. One day he found an old recipe for an herbal cordial made by the Benedictine monks out of a distillation of

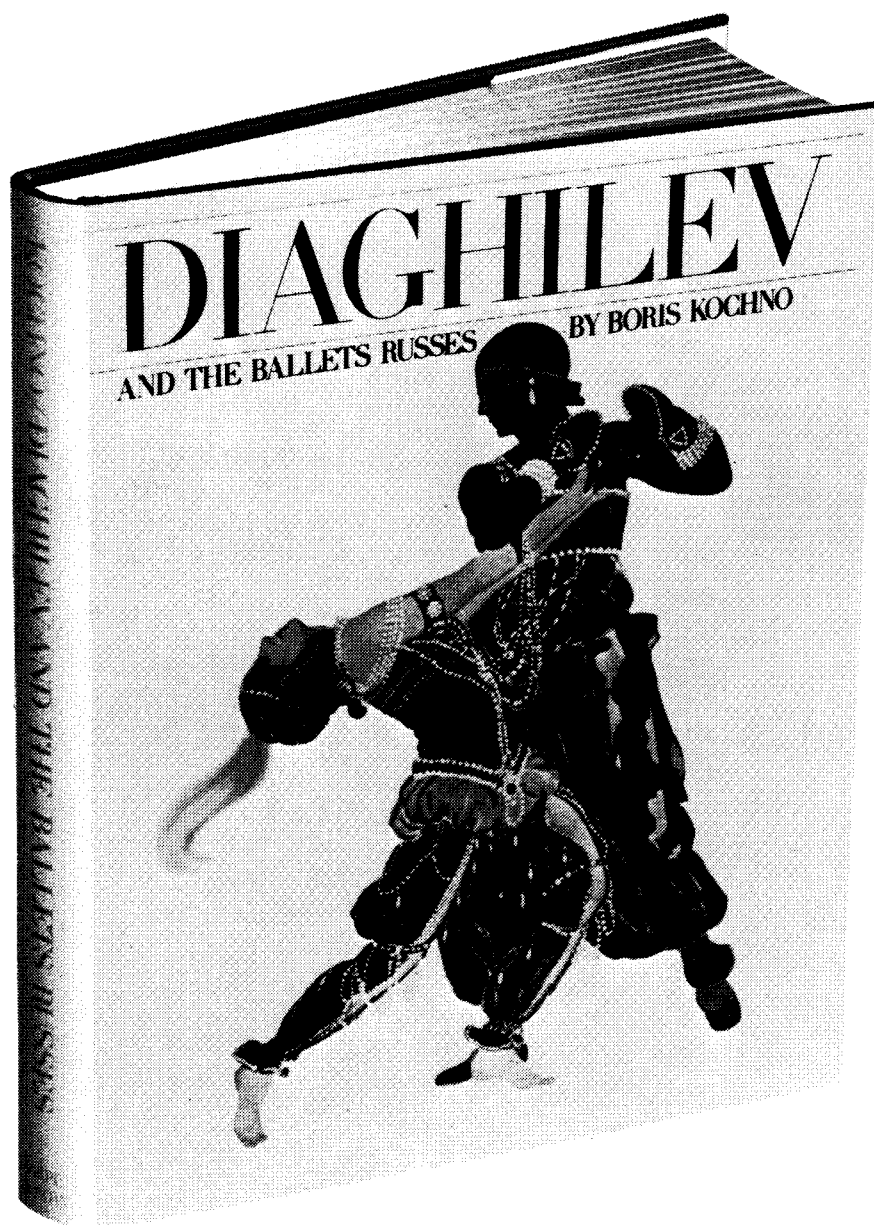
some thirty local herbs, honey, and tea. Le Grand followed the recipe carefully, but the result tasted too strong. For years he experimented with it, adding and subtracting ingredients until he was using fifty herbs, and it tasted just fine. So in 1868 Bénédictine, now a world-famous liqueur, was invented, as Simca says, "by a monk that had twenty-one children."

Simca's paternal grandfather, an engineer of German extraction, built the first wool-carding machine in France. Her father had a factory that baked and crushed the black stones of the Normandy coast into a silicate used to make ceramic tile.

With a convent-school education and an early marriage, Simca did not seem about to follow in her father's and grandfathers' enterprising footsteps. She studied artistic bookbinding, entered five hand-tooled leather bindings in the 1933 Exposition des Arts Décoratifs at the Grand Palais, won a prize, and said to herself, "Now I don't want to do that anymore!"

But one has only to ride around the Place de la Concorde in a car that Simca is driving to sense her independence, general forcefulness, and initiative. One day, after she had left bookbinding behind her, she was cruising down rue du Faubourg

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AT ALL BOOKSTORES

Saint-Honoré in her little coupé when she looked up and said, "*Tiens, le Cordon Bleu!* Why don't I go and have some lessons?" Four chefs, one war, several thousand recipes, and fifteen years later, she met Julia Child.

Julia's career had also gotten off to a slow start. After graduating from Smith, she played golf for a year and was "just a butterfly." Next she tried out advertising in New York and Beverly Hills, then drifted around the West Coast until the war came and she drifted to Washington and into the OSS. The OSS sent her to Ceylon, where she met Paul Child "at a tea planter's bungalow. There were elephants wandering around and beautiful old ruined places." After the war they were married, and Julia picked up what cooking she knew where she

had left it—on a Washington hot plate. Paul recalls: "I was willing to put up with that awful cooking to get Julia." In 1948, Paul's job took them to Paris, and Julia enrolled in the Cordon Bleu. "Since then," she says, "my whole life has been cooking. One is so lucky when one does what one likes. I like what I do so much that I'd just as soon work about 90 percent of the time and relax the rest. Until I discovered cooking and realized, 'This is what I really want to do,' I was just fussing around and mucking about."

Simca, in the meantime, had joined with a friend, Louise Bertholle Rémion, daughter of a noted Parisian *antiquaire*, in trying to write a French cookbook for Americans. They needed an American collaborator. In

the summer of 1950, a mutual friend invited Simca to a cocktail party in order to meet Julia. He told Simca, "You will know Julia because she will be the tallest woman there." As Simca recalls the historic meeting, "When I first saw her she was sitting down, but I noticed that she was speaking English. Then she stood up—and up—and up—and we threw our arms around one another, and from that moment my life was absolutely changed."

The next decade was a frenzy of activity. For a while Julia and Simca explored each other's cooking skills and the possibilities for recipes that Americans could follow and would like. But they caught fire from one another's enthusiasm, and their original idea blew up into enormous proportions. Says Julia: "We were going to do a complete treatise on French cooking. After about a year of work we had produced a sauce chapter."

Meanwhile, Paul's State Department posts took the Childs away from Paris to Marseilles, Bonn, Washington, Oslo. An incredible correspondence began between Julia and Simca which is still going on. It includes reports on their cooking experiments, recipes they have found or invented, arguments over ingredients or how the results should or do taste, text pages of the book, research notes, gossip, jokes, personal news, an occasional lyric description of a great meal or a scenic wonder—all in French laced with English going in one direction, and in English laced with French going in the other.

There were visits. Simca packed herself down to Marseilles for a stint with Julia and American flour. Julia is said by a friend to have journeyed from France to Bad Godesberg with twenty-four Nantais chickens in her suitcase. Both of them had to scrounge in the PX's and U.S. Embassy commissaries for the American ingredients so necessary to their experiments. Friends were enlisted to run flour. Simca's husband, Jean, ate *gratin dauphinois* for fifteen consecutive days, comparing each new *gratin* with the previous day's leftovers. Paul had *blanquette de veau* for eight days running, until it was declared perfect.

Julia and Simca spent fifteen years trying to make puff pastry with American all-purpose flour before they decided that it couldn't be done.

THE THING ABOUT CATS

Cats hang out with witches quite a lot;
that's not it.

The thing about cats is
they're always looking at you.
Especially when you're asleep.

Some cats pretend they're not looking
until you're not looking.
They are not to be trusted.

Some cats scowl because they're wearing
imitation fur. They feel inferior.

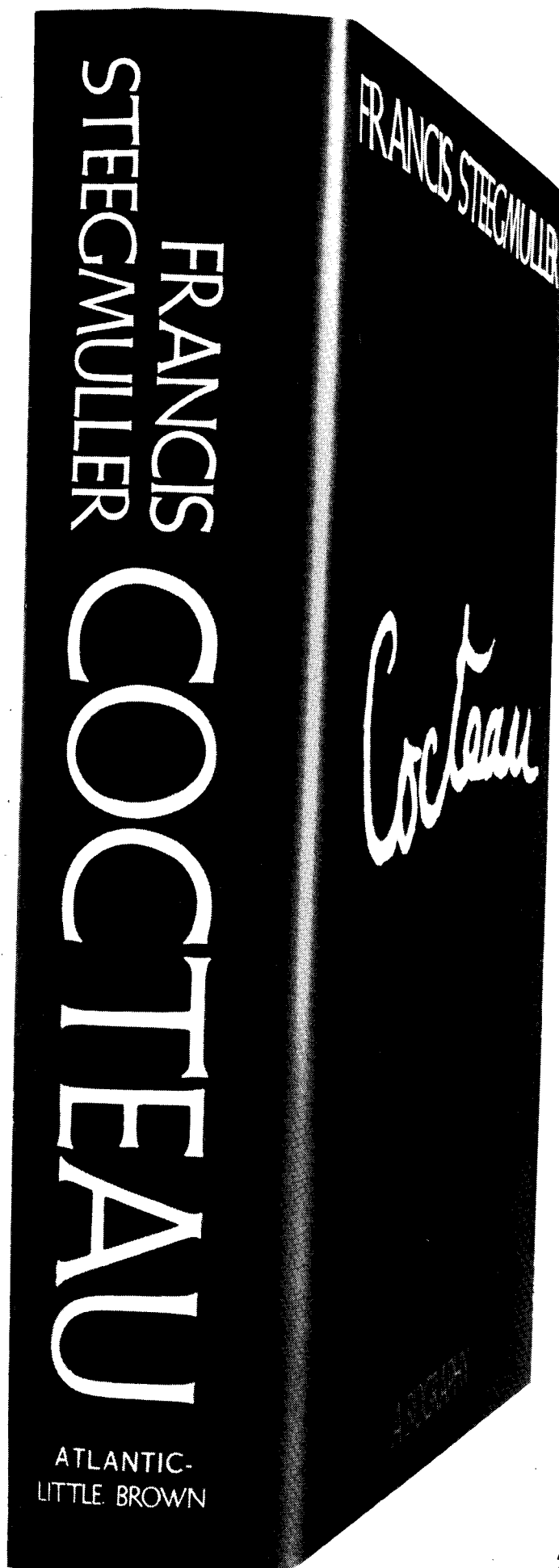
Some other cats look at you straight on
so that you can't drink your drink
or make love
but keep thinking
that cat's looking at me straight on.

But all cats do the same:
they look at you
and you look out
and in.

A cat is not a conscience; I'm not
saying that.

What I'm saying is
why are they looking?

by John L'Heureux



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Finally they came up with a magical mixture of supermarket all-purpose and supermarket plain cake flour that *could* be turned into a self-respecting puff pastry.

All the while they were solving the riddles of other American ingredients, evolving their careful, lucid style, assembling their recipes, and, as Julia says, "taking all the flappedoodle out." "One reason it took so long," she adds, "is that we had to learn so much while we were doing it."

In 1956 Paul started a two-year Washington tour of duty, and Simca invaded the United States with the dual purpose of finishing the book and having a look for herself at "this American food." Like some sort of culinary anthropologist, she made a swing through the South on a Greyhound bus, sampling twenty-minute aboriginal meals en route. All she recalls of this field trip are the pumpkin pies ("I think they had no taste") and the fried chicken ("brown and black like wood").

Julia, however, remembers Simca cutting a much wider—and more enthusiastic—swath through the alien corn. "Everything from frozen blinis and chocolate sodas to tuna fish sandwiches at drugstore counters," she says, were tried "with great gusto." Simca's conclusion was that America needed their book.

Houghton Mifflin, on the other hand, presented with some eight hundred pages of manuscript, blanched whiter than the tablecloths in a three-star restaurant, and told them to come off it. Julia met Simca at the Washington bus terminal with a long face: "I have awful news. They don't want our book." The Simca of fifteen consecutive *gratins dauphinois* replied: "Don't worry. We'll do another one. We are going to do it better!"

Without ever again consulting the old manuscript, they plunged into writing a completely new book. "We worked like devils," says Simca. By 1959 an entirely new version was again turned down by Houghton Mifflin, but Knopf thought better of it and published it in October, 1961. So far, it has sold 700,000 hardcover copies.

Julia's subsequent surprise success making an omelette on television ("we didn't even own a television set") led to a 134-show series and her enshrinement as an American folk heroine. If she had not had the

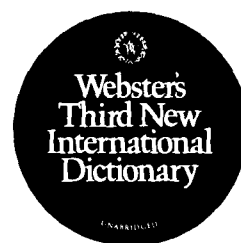
least idea of what she was talking about, no doubt many of her fans would still have tuned her in, just to hear her address the blending machine which refused to grind the fish *filets* with, "What is the matter with you? Are you all right?" or invite her viewers to "see the careless chic of these poached eggs." In fact, she knew exactly what she was talking about, and it showed.

The success of *Mastering I* got in the way of *Mastering II* for a while. Julia took time out to tape the television shows and put out her *French Chef Cookbook*. Nevertheless, she and Simca kept pressing ahead with their plans for the second volume, and when Julia declared a television moratorium ("until color"), they went back to "spending a sort of seven-day week on the book."

Although they both test and taste and consult endlessly over what will go into the *Masterings*, there is some division of labor between them. Julia does the writing; Simca accumulates ideas for recipes and rides herd on how the product tastes when Julia has fitted the American ingredients into it. They often disagree rather violently. Says Julia, "We get into terrible arguments, but it doesn't make any difference because we love one another."

There was, for example, The Great Cassoulet Debate, a monumental battle over whether or not you could make cassoulet without preserved goose. Simca maintained that cassoulet's only reason for existing was to use up all the preserved goose that is an inevitable by-product in a country that produces an inordinate amount of goose liver. Julia, on the other hand, argued that it was almost impossible to buy preserved goose in the United States, that there were many authentic recipes for cassoulet that didn't include it, and that it didn't make much difference in the taste anyway.

The battle raged for weeks, all by mail. Appropriately Simca took her stand, in excessively polite if slightly sarcastic French, on her instinct as well as that privileged taste that is conferred automatically on anyone fortunate enough to be born French. Julia, whose style is as forthright as Pasadena and as unwavering as Smith College could make it, assumed her own natural role of the American who must earn her cultural way and riposted with an eight-page single-spaced *précis* on cassoulet. Says



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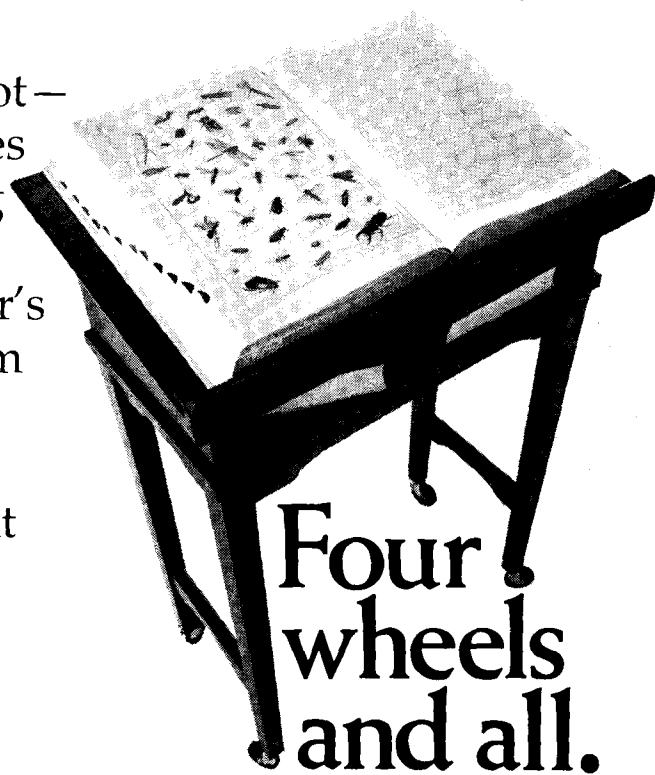
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Julia: "I don't think she even read it." So Julia sent along forty-five pages of historical references.

The outcome of the argument is there in the book for anyone to read. (Preserved goose was mentioned, but Julia had the last word: "... you may find difficulty in distinguishing goose from pork.") The most important thing was not the battle but the way it kept getting interrupted by the endless reports, strewn through the heated dispatches, on all the different varieties of American beans that had been assembled by Julia, with the advice of the United States Department of Agriculture, and that were in the process of being tested. Julia had shipped off some of the most likely candidates to Simca, and the two authors were busily soaking samples

THE WRITERS

Malcolm Cowley is a critic, poet, and literary historian whose new collection of essays on American writers, *A Many-Windowed House*, has just been published.

Stefan Kanfer is film critic for *Time* magazine.

Betty Suyker is a *Time* researcher and writer who confesses to a passion for French bread and cookbooks.

David Denby is a New York-based free-lance writer who frequently reviews films for the *Atlantic*.

Edward Weeks and Phoebe Adams write regular monthly columns of book reviews for these pages.

Andrew Glaze (page 73) is the author of a book of poetry, *Damned Ugly Children*.

Ross Talarico (page 81) will have his first book of poems published in January.

Stanley Kunitz is a poet, editor, teacher, and former Pulitzer prize-winner. The poem on page 94 will be included in his new collection, *The Testing Tree*, to be published in March.

John L'Heureux (page 112) is the author of several books of poetry and prose.

for different lengths of time in hot and cold water, brine, broth, or what-have-you to see which, after what sort of fiddling, most closely approximated the taste and texture of French *haricots blancs secs* as used in cassoulet.

Julia and Simca research all their recipes down to the last bean. When they say that they have tried all the known ways of cooking asparagus and have come to the conclusion that peeling it is the best way, you can be sure they have done just that—and you can start peeling. And they go at the chore of finding substitute ingredients with the zeal of archaeologists looking for lost cities. French ingredients far less exotic than preserved goose are frequently unavailable in the United States, and even such basics as American flour, cream, and bacon, to name just a few, are different enough from their French counterparts to play havoc in French recipes if used without adjustments. *Mastering* tells you how to offset the excessive gluten or dryness of American flour, how to ferment American sweet cream to arrive at *crème fraîche*, how to blanch the smoky taste out of American bacon.

Mastering seems to fulfill almost every need of the cook. Every basic culinary operation is not only carefully and clearly described, but supported by an explanation of why you have to go to all that trouble. Most cookbook writers—and cooks—haven't the least idea why, and wouldn't tell if they did.

The only things *Mastering* didn't tell were things Julia and Simca hadn't got around to yet; and the ever-growing numbers of Beck-Child enthusiasts were awaiting the second volume while they were still mastering the first. It took nine years.

With some of the earnings from *Mastering I*, Julia and Paul built "La Pitchoune," a tiny cottage in Provence, right next door to "Bramafam"—Simca and Jean's tiny cottage. Soon Simca, who has a vast repertoire of recipes but is always casting out for new ideas, was preparing dishes in her kitchen at Bramafam, then dashing them over to La Pitchoune, "a small 100 meters away," for Paul and Julia to taste—and say "*non*" to. Sighs Simca, "Of 200 recipes, maybe only 50 went out. But I knew. I knew she was right."

And Simca sometimes prevailed. During the work on *Mastering II*, a

running battle over a cake called *Les Quatre Quarts* had some of the old spunk of the cassoulet days. Julia wrote, "I hate it!" Simca wrote back indignantly that Jean "was astonished" at Julia's attitude toward the "most ancient and most popular French cakes." Julia was adamant. "This early monster" should not be in the book. But it is there, if only by dint of a change in the method of mixing it that, Julia concedes, "makes a decent cake of it."

Simca says that Julia must return to France at least once a year "to keep the real flavor of French food in her mind." Julia needs no excuse to go to Provence: "All the tourists are gone from there in the fall, leaving just us froggies."

That there would be a *Mastering II* was decided late in 1961, just after *Mastering I* appeared. The Beck-Child work-style always generates about 800 percent more material than any publisher has yet volunteered to try to get into a single binding. For a while the second volume was going to be a simple continuation of the first—more of the same great recipes exhaustively researched, masterfully adapted, carefully described. But it was as if all the wild acclaim and phenomenal success won by the first book lifted up their eyes, swelled their hearts, blew their careful minds. If *Mastering I* was really all that great, then *Mastering II* must be significantly greater. As Simca put it, "We decided that every recipe in *Mastering II* must be *signé trois étoiles*!" It was Julia, spurred on by their editor, who came up with an even grander notion: "We must have a really extraordinary chapter on bread."

This simple statement might not seem such a high flight to Americans, many of whom are fearless bakers of homemade bread. But Julia was talking about real French bread, baked only by professional bakers in France and, because of the long-held conviction that it couldn't be made with American flour or without brick-lined steam ovens, never baked at all in the United States. In culinary context, Julia's words were on a level with John F. Kennedy's "I believe we should go to the moon," and they were to launch *Mastering II* into the gastronomic stratosphere.

In May, 1967, Julia started sending Simca pages and pages of notes,

quotes, reflections, and reports on bread. Paul, who had taken the thousands of photographs on which *Mastering I's* sketched illustrations were based and who had retired in time to prepare the book's index as well, not to mention the incredible array of duties he took over on the television show, offered to help on the breadmaking. Julia and Paul in Cambridge, Massachusetts, set out in two directions; Simca, in Paris and "Bramafam-Pitchoune," set out in a third. The massive assault had begun.

Julia flung herself into the American flour again, with tests for gluten content and investigations of hard and soft, bleached and unbleached flours. She even went so far as to write to an American flour company to suggest they make a special flour that would have some of the properties needed for making good French bread, but they wrote back and told her they were doing fine without it.

For months, batches of dough were constantly rising in the cellar while the oven baked and baked and baked. As Julia once said, "I think the stronger you are, the better. Pastry cooks are quite big people—it's very much of a disadvantage if you aren't. But in cooking you develop your muscles. You just have to build yourself up."

"Two years and some 284 pounds of flour later," they achieved French bread. To bake it they had invented the "simulated baker's oven" in which a pan of water and a very hot brick supply the necessary steam. Prior to that device, they had tried everything from flinging open the oven door and throwing in wet towels to nose-spray atomizers and "boiled brooms." Other vital aspects of French breadmaking eluded them, however, until in a particularly dark moment, they took themselves to the professional baking school in Paris. "I have never taught a woman to make bread before," the professor told Simca. "But do you think we are too stupid to learn?" she asked. "*Non, non, madame*, I simply remarked that I have not done it before!" As Julia recalls, "It was like the sun in all his glory breaking through the shades of gloom."

Last winter, when *Mastering II* was still in manuscript and the "extraordinary bread chapter," with its *baguettes* and *brioche*s and *croissants*,

was getting its final loving pats in Simca's living room, she was asked what else was going to be in the book. "Ha!" she said, and left the room. Minutes later she returned with another thick chapter called "*La Charcuterie Chez Soi*." It didn't seem possible; not only had they "mastered" the bread, they had also gone after that other staple of French cooking, *la charcuterie*. All the heavenly pork products—the sausages, the *pâtés*, the *terrines*, sausage meat, parslid ham—as well as liver *pâtés*, and preserved goose, were to be brought into the American home.

For their sausage research, Julia had bought "kilometers" of *boyau* (animal intestines) and a meat grinder with a sausage-stuffing attachment. Simca went and cased a *charcuterie* factory. Then they retired to Provence for an orgy of sausage-making. "You turn it to end each sausage," says Simca, "and poach it instantly."

The rest of *Mastering II* is full of new, if more conventional, wonders—a chicken poached in white wine that changes identity with different sauces, that puff-pastry flour formula that took fifteen years to find, two new chocolate cakes, a *filet* of beef stuffed

Something lovely to put under the tree.

(While there's still a tree left.)

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THE EARTH'S WILD PLACES

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with a mushroom *duxelles*, and so on.

But the greatest wonder of *Mastering II* is that it has surpassed *Mastering I*. Surely almost all of the 700,000 people who already own the first volume dream of finding the second

under the Christmas tree this year. And for the few unfortunates who do not have Volume One, or who have worn it out or dropped it in the *pot-au-feu*, there is also a boxed edition of the two volumes together.

a child to the dentist for the first time, hurting the child in order to help him. The journals also reveal Itard as a man quick to admit his own mistakes, as a masterly self-observer and self-critic. He is much too aware of this egotism to be threatened by it.

Truffaut plays Itard himself. The director is a darkly handsome, deft little man, but as a performer he's terribly buttoned-up and inexpressive. The fear of vulgarity seems to have choked him. Nevertheless, the performance claims our interest as a sign of how completely Truffaut admires and identifies with Itard. Perhaps he imagines his task as an artist to be something like Itard's as a scientist; for both, creation begins with a loving but rigorous observation of human nature. In the more immediate sense, they are both educating a boy; Itard's forming of an intelligence and personality that remains uncreated is paralleled by Truffaut's work with a twelve-year-old Gypsy from the south of France, Jean-Pierre Cargol, who is unformed as a performer, and who has to be taught to move, listen, and react in a completely new way. Truffaut wanted to do this without an intermediary.

He has gotten a tremendous performance out of Cargol as Victor—a startling projection of the physical nature of man when he lived as an equal with the other animals. When we first see him, scrambling on all fours through the woods, or once captured, being led on a leash through a crowd of derisive villagers, he looks like an immense, maddened insect, struggling to find a safe spot on familiar ground. Truffaut keeps the camera back in long shot, and Cargol holds his head down, so we can't really make out what he looks like. Only later, in a sudden, stealthy camera movement toward the subject, do we see the human face, blinking and terrified, as it is wiped clean of grime. Even after Cargol has been taught to walk upright and sleep in a bed, the strangeness of his physical presence is often moving. At times he escapes from the house and rocks back and forth on his knees on the earth, in ecstatic, soundless serenades to the moon and the rain; we observe him at these moments from behind a window in the house, as if to preserve his privacy and separation from us. At other times, frustrated by Itard's constant lessons, he throws

MOVIES

TRUFFAUT CONTRE LA MODE

by David Denby

L'ENFANT SAUVAGE (THE WILD CHILD)

directed by François Truffaut
United Artists

François Truffaut's new movie, his strongest since *Jules and Jim* (1962), was the standout attraction of the eighth New York Film Festival in September and is the most beautiful picture I have seen all year. Yet there is reason to suspect that *L'Enfant Sauvage* will not be a hit in this country. The movie has been set in the past—an exquisite, slightly stylized version of the eighteenth century, perceived without condescension or anachronistic touches. Responding to its ideas and formal rhetoric may require a degree of historical imagination and sympathy that today's art-house audience—so harshly engaged with the crisis of the present—isn't willing to expend. Typically, this audience looks for confirmation of its own fears and desires; it won't find it in *L'Enfant Sauvage*.

Truffaut has structured his movie around some highly unfashionable themes, such as the humanity of science and pedagogy, the dignity of the student-teacher relationship, and the value of *learning* as the activity which above all allows us to become fully human. He dramatizes this material without much surface emotion and with a high degree of spare elegance. The great moments and revelations are there, but they don't grab you by the throat; the film requires an effort of emotional as well as intellectual projection. Its antecedents include the paintings of Chardin, the French engravings of the eighteenth century, and the great early films of Robert Bresson, such as *Diary of a Country Priest*.

Truffaut's true story is based on the journals of Dr. Jean Itard, *Memoire*

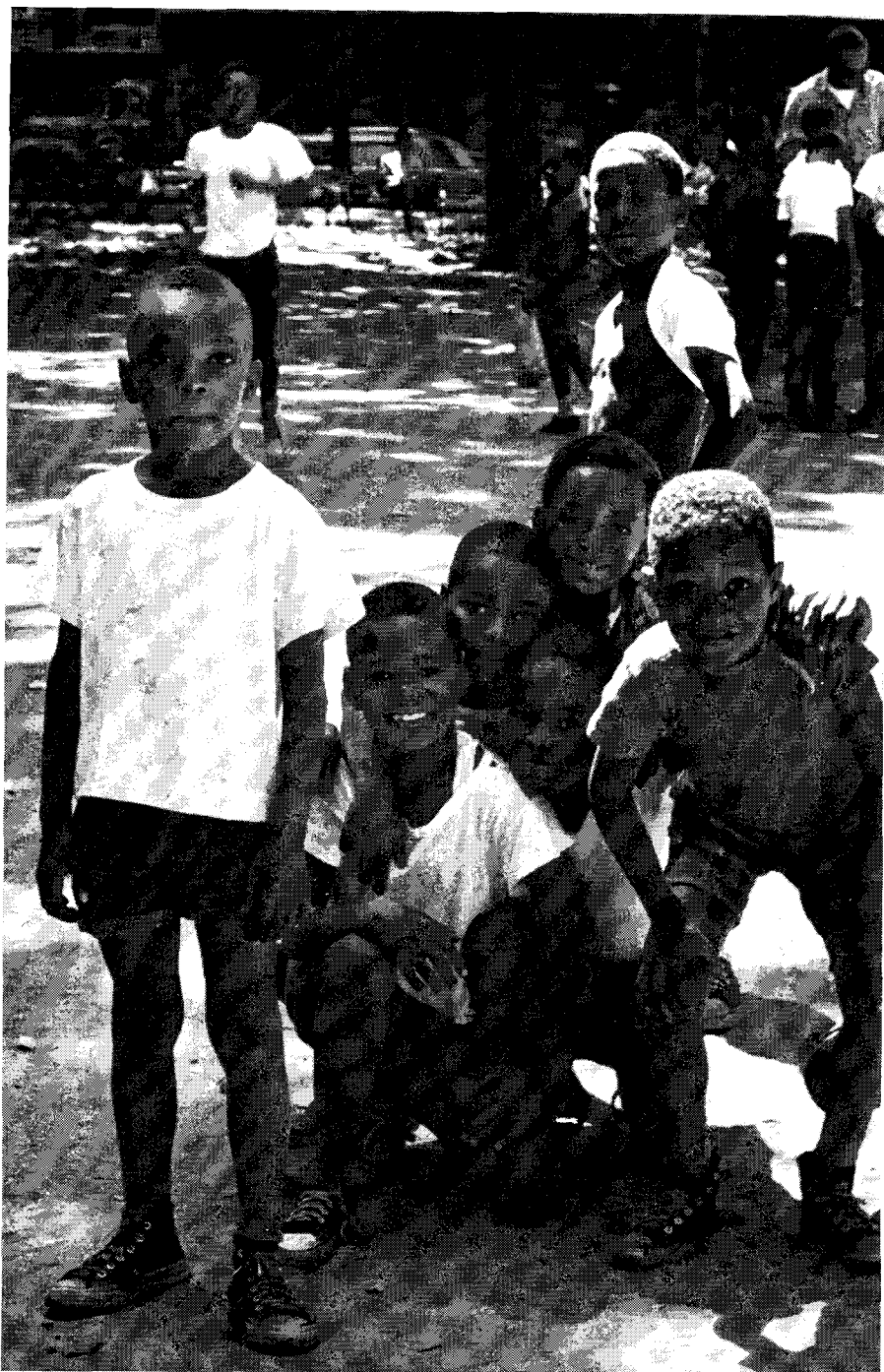
et rapport sur Victor de l'Aveyron, published in Paris in 1806. In 1798 Itard took upon himself the stupendous task of educating a boy who had lived alone in the woods for eight or nine years after being abandoned as an infant. A naked howling animal of twelve years, the boy cannot speak and hears only natural sounds; one expert thinks he was abandoned because he was deaf and dumb. Itard's immediate aim is to prove that the boy's intelligence is simply dormant, undeveloped; his long-range intention is to bring this creature, whom he names Victor, to a state of fully developed humanity, which means to claim him for eighteenth-century civilization and order. Itard cannot for more than an instant entertain the fancy that Victor was better off in the woods, and it is obvious that Truffaut doesn't either—although he does show the savage as noble in his physical abilities. Perhaps most modern artists would be struck with the egotism inherent in Itard's project or even its foolishness or futility, but Truffaut presents it as a blessing for the boy and a valiant adventure for Itard.

The action of the movie is reinforced and discussed in excerpts from Itard's journals that are read onto the sound track, and these excerpts show why Truffaut treats Itard without critical irony: although Victor's unformed mind is a field for experiment, a test for pedagogical theory, Itard is anything but a tinkering, uninvolved scientist-observer. He soon learns to love the boy deeply, and every new method he tries with Victor is also a risk for himself: What if the boy should become upset and escape to the woods? Victor's lessons are painful for both of them; in a festival press conference, Truffaut compared Itard's emotions to those of a father taking

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a furious and completely awkward tantrum, dropping to the ground abruptly, kicking wildly at nothing. Cargol conveys an extraordinary capacity for pleasure and pain that has been frozen into odd gestures and peculiar movements. Now that the wolf man has come out of the woods, he looks passing strange, but he doesn't frighten. Nothing could be further from Truffaut's intention than titillating us with a freak.

After Itard rescues Victor from an institute for the deaf and dumb, where he is considered an idiot and publicly displayed for the amusement of fashionable Parisians, he takes him home to the country and surrounds him, with the aid of his housekeeper (Françoise Seigner), in an atmosphere of loving order, cleanliness, and discipline. Victor's education proceeds in stages. First he is given a definite identity—a name, his own clothes, a room, and some privacy; later Itard tries to teach him the function of language, the relation of names to pictures and pictures to things; finally, he schools the emotions and the sense of justice, which become the principal element in Victor's moral development.

Itard's general method—with many experimental variations—is to punish Victor for not making an effort, force him to try again if he makes the wrong response, and reward him with a glass of water when some light breaks through. The inadequacies of this approach are completely obvious to him, and only a gross lack of historical perspective could fault his inventiveness in such an unprecedented job. Anyway, what is most reprehensible to modern educational practice—punishment in a dark closet—turns out to be crucial to Victor's developing sensibility. At first Victor has no sense of personal injury; it is only when his teacher puts him in the closet that he weeps. At the most exalted moment of the film, Itard tries to punish him unjustly to see if he rebels. It is a moment of great danger, for Itard risks destroying all the rapport he has built up with his student. When Victor does fight back, Itard concludes that the boy has been "elevated to the full stature of a civilized man"—even though Victor still cannot speak or read. Such a generous conception of civilization should be very attractive to today's audience, but Truffaut has

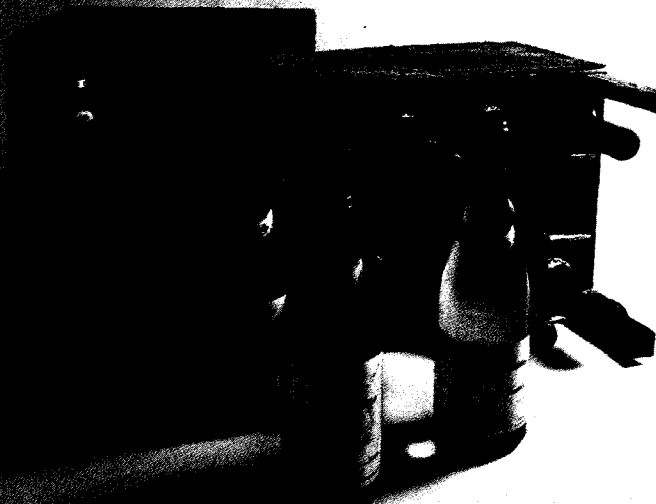
Anyone who remembers his first feature, *The 400 Blows*, with its deathly schoolroom and petty-bureaucratic teachers, knows that he doesn't have a shred of general sentimentality about the value of education or the nature of its effects on children; he simply won't treat this story from the past as a framework for plugging in contemporary attitudes and judgments in the manner of Tony Richardson (*Charge of the Light Brigade* and *Ned Kelly*) or Ralph Nelson (*Soldier Blue*).

To photograph it, Truffaut chose to avoid color film, which so often looks banal; instead, he and his director of photography, Nestor Almendros, rely on the elegance of black and white, with its exquisite capacity for recording the texture of light on

Godard's old description of Truffaut's work—"rigorous and tender"—has never been more apt. By pulling us away from the characters with the recitations from Itard's loving but precise journal, Truffaut restrains the sentimentality inherent in the story. The constant use of medium distance shots has the same effect; they allow us to see the interactions between Itard and Victor without the effect of emotional underlining produced by cutting into close-up. Truffaut expects us to do a lot of careful listening and looking. He seems to have thrown off his famous charm and his recent obsession with Hitchcock's crowd-

At the end of the Film Festival, some of the best pictures remained without an American distributor, including *The Garden of Delights*, a Spanish film directed by Carlos Saura; *Mistreatment*, Swedish, directed by Lasse Forsberg; and *Days and Nights in the Forest*, Indian, directed by the great Satyajit Ray. Among those that you will get a chance to see, look especially for *Kes*, directed by Kenneth Loach, the story of a young Yorkshire boy's devotion to the training of a pet falcon: a perfect demonstration of two kinds of education, good (informal, passionate, self-induced) and bad (formal, mechanical, coerced). Two other films of interest: *Tristana*, starring Catherine Deneuve, an expert but highly formularized demonstration of Luis Buñuel; and *The Conformist*, starring Jean-Louis Trintignant, a flamboyant, confusing, and stylistically eclectic study in the psychopathology of Italian fascism, directed by Bernardo Bertolucci.

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By Calvin B. T. Lee. Here is the book that Louis Kronenberger wrote about with such enthusiasm in the October *Atlantic*.

The book's lively picture of the past 70 years of campus life makes it a wonderful Christmas gift for students and alumni alike. Photographs. \$6.95



McKAY

THE PERIPATETIC REVIEWER

by Edward Weeks

THE MYTH OF THE MACHINE: THE PENTAGON OF POWER

by Lewis Mumford

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$12.95

Those who heard Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer deliver the Arthur Dehon Little Lecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in November of 1947 will remember the anguish in his voice as he spoke of the moral dilemma which confronted those who, like himself, had prepared the atomic bomb and were aware of the still more terrible weapons to come. It was as if the rabbi in him was pleading with the nuclear physicist for the future of man. He left us with a heartfelt warning and the wonder of how it ever transpired in this vastly promising New World of ours that machines were so firmly in the saddle and were riding mankind.

The reckless pace has been steadily accelerated in our competition with the Soviet Union, and our leaders—and theirs—seemingly lack the power to slow it down. We have watched with dismay the extravagant sums spent on the space program when our home space was in such crying need, and we are appalled by the capture of our economy by the military-industrial partnership. To expect that our republic with its vast resources could be restored to peace and devoted to rehabilitation is almost unthinkable. It is in such dismay that one turns to Lewis Mumford's penetrating, indignant, and refreshing volume *The Pentagon of Power*, his second to explode "The Myth of the Machine."

Mr. Mumford begins by tracing the evolution of technical power, and to anyone who trusts history his interpretation of the great explorers of science like Galileo, Kepler, and Descartes is surprising and pointed up with memorable insight. The modern world picture, he says, was first conceived in the fifth decade of the sixteenth century, which saw the publication of Copernicus' treatise on astronomy, Vesalius' on anatomy, Jerome Cardan's algebra, "The Great Art," and Fracastoro's enunciation of the germ theory of disease. This led

to a religious, a scientific, and ultimately a technological revolution, and, as Mumford says, it was not only the Christian heaven which diminished. "Viewed through the new glasses of science, man shrank in size: in terms of astronomical quantities the human race counted for little more than an ephemeral swarm of midges on the planet itself. By contrast, science, which had made this shattering discovery by the mere exercise of common human faculties. . . became the only trustworthy source of authentic and reputable knowledge."

This was the first stage in reading man out of the real and primary realm, and in the centuries that followed the truths of subjective experience and the testimony of history were belittled by the cult of the new and fascinating abstractions. But not without purpose: "Scientific thought is essentially power thought," wrote Bertrand Russell, "the sort of thought, that is to say, whose purpose, conscious or unconscious, is to give power to its possessor."

Just as the mechanical world was opening up so was the terrestrial. For four centuries the New Exploration ransacked every part of the planet: "Exploration was merely the first stage of exploitation; and with it came back war, slavery, economic pillage and piracy, and environmental destruction: the ancient trauma of 'civilization,' which has been imprinted upon every 'advanced' culture ever since." It was Alexander von Humboldt, one of the most humane and articulate of the scientists, who remarked that "in this paradise of the American forests, as well as elsewhere, experience has taught all beings that benignity is seldom found together with power."

This book is the brilliant culmination of a life of reading, remonstrance, and reflection, a body of constructive criticism begun a long time ago and steadily ripening in strength. Jane Jacobs is right: Mr. Mumford has never liked our cities; essentially he is an arcadian, happiest in the small community where man comes closer to nature. His heroes of the New

World are Audubon, Olmsted, Emerson, Marsh, Melville, and Whitman —“neither hermits nor primitives; but in their minds at least they had thrown off the frayed and soiled clothes of all previous civilizations”— and he lives to see their tribe increase.

It will not do to paraphrase his concluding chapters; they must be thoughtfully absorbed in the short subsections which help to make his text digestible. Like Beethoven's, the variations on his main theme renew and deepen our appreciation. The book is not easy reading, but one's patience is rewarded by Mumford's relish of Samuel Butler, who, ahead of his time, saw through our technological obsession; by his scorn of Dadaism and the vacuity of Pop Art; by his laughter at the absurdities of Buckminster Fuller and Marshall McLuhan; and by his understanding of the misguided primitivism of our long-hairs. “In their unconscious,” he writes, “the young are living in a post-catastrophic world; and their conduct would be rational in terms of that world. Only by massing together and touching each other's bodies do they have any sense of security and continuity.” He derides the illusions they grope for “in the haze and daze of pot.”

Mumford believes that old and young must face up to changes, for, he says, “in surrendering unconditionally to the power system, with its ‘automation of automation,’ modern man has forfeited some of the inner resources necessary to keep him alive.” He challenges us to turn the “power complex into an organic complex, and a money economy into a life economy.” These are difficult turn-arounds but mandatory in Mumford's view, if man is to restore control over his own creations.

BOMBER

by Len Deighton
Harper & Row, \$7.95

What distinguishes *Bomber*, Len Deighton's novel about the RAF, from the many other stories I have read about the airmen in World War II, is its involvement with both sides: opposed are seven hundred British bombers directed at the heavy industry in the Ruhr, and the German night fighters and antiaircraft crews who plot to intercept them. Involved also, and punishingly, are the German civil-



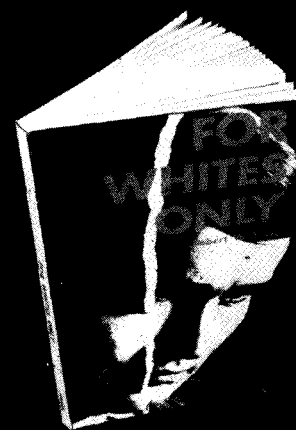
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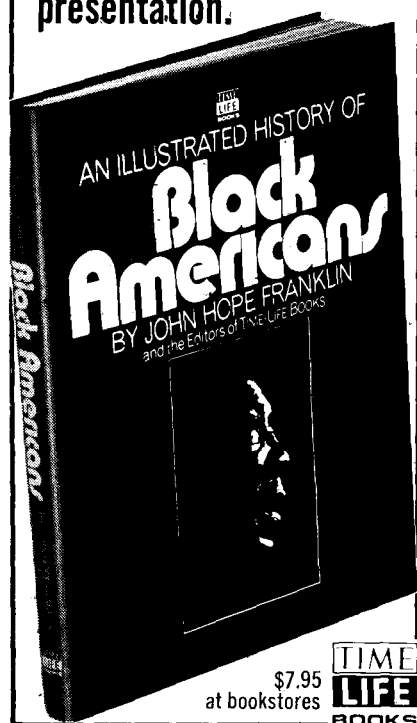


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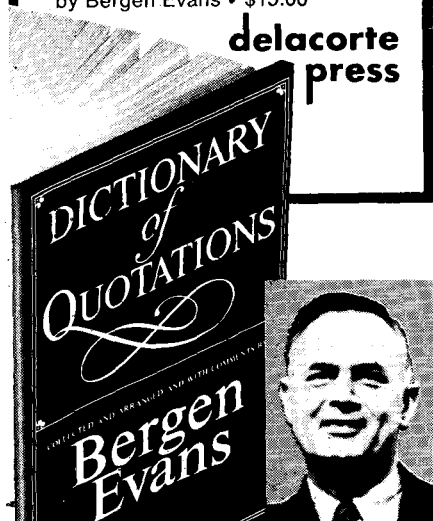
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ians in the medieval town of Altgarten, which, through the force of the wind and the fault of the crews sent to place the incandescent markers, became the innocent victims. There is no protection for anyone in this compelling, skillful story, not for the fliers who are being shot at, not for the Burgomaster and his guests who are celebrating his birthday, and not for the reader. What holds one fast is Mr. Deighton's surpassing knowledge of machines, his breathless "sweating out" of the raid, and his vital, compassionate characterization of the men who fly, and of the women, children, and elders who are hurt. It requires no stretch of the imagination to substitute a thousand small communities in Vietnam for the one German town on which, on this soft June night, ten million pounds of high explosives and incendiaries are unleashed.

The novelist is not sparing in his detail; the suspense and the suffering in this book would be unbearable were it not for his ability to light up the lives of those he writes about. He deals as fairly with the British at Little Warley in the Fen country, where the bombers are preparing for their run, as with the Germans at Kroonsdijk, where the *Luftwaffe* night fighters are waiting in anticipation of the midnight call. At each station there is a protagonist through whose reaction and remonstrance we are made sensitive to the others who must brave death: at the British field, Sergeant Sam Lambert, a survivor of forty-five missions, probably the best pilot in the Group, whose loathing of destruction has made him dangerously outspoken, and on the German field Baron Victor von Löwenherz, the ace from Prussia, aware that the war is going badly, appalled by what he hears of the concentration camps but still obeying orders. In the little town of Altgarten itself is a third transmitter, August Bach, a veteran of the First World War and now too old for combat but not too old to fall in love.

Through these three men, strangers, of course, to each other, through the men who serve them and the women who love them, one feels the common link of courage, loyalty, and desperation with which they are sustained. They are the pygmy heroes. And the machines they command—which eventually command them—are the villains.

August's son is fighting on the Eastern front, and when asked by his dearest friend whether the boy hates it, August replies, "Max, my friend, I have to tell you he likes it. We have given our world to our children. Can we be surprised that these children are destructive . . . and wreak havoc upon the world that it's taken us old men so long to put together?" There is the theme: the devastation of machines and the decency powerless to bring them to a halt.

THE SPAWNING RUN
by William Humphrey
Knopf, \$4.50

A most charming and mischievous story about salmon is *The Spawning Run* by William Humphrey. The author, a young American with a saucy humor, has gone to England in quest of some good fishing on protected water. Scotland is too rich for his blood, but at a fishing inn on the River Teme in Wales, he and his wife are accepted by the habitués as unconventional but agreeable colonials. For one thing Mr. Humphrey fishes "in old blue jeans, a blue work shirt I once wore to paint a red barn, and my Brooklyn Dodgers baseball cap," which, of course, sets him apart from the Harris Tweeds and beige drill-cord breeches.

The inn is full of surprises, and chief of them "poor old Holloway," a low-built, balding bachelor turning fifty, who for all his reputed diligence has not killed a fish in twenty years. Holloway and his failures have become a legend, and the members would have too little to laugh at without him, but it is the American who discovers that Holloway is not there to fish but to care for the salmon widows with time on their hands. I have frequented such inns: I have seen the Admiral who each morning bangs the barometer and predicts that no fish will be taken; I have tasted the food; and I have remarked the appealing look of the abandoned wives who do not cast. If pleasure can be expressed in a single word, it is Bravo!

ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPERY
by Curtis Cate
Putnam's, \$10.00

A pioneer airman whose love for flying was awakened by Wilbur Wright, a daring pilot who flew first

in 1912 and who was to navigate the primitive crates over the Pyrenees and through sand storms of the desert, a writer whose power of description made his two books, *Wind, Sand and Stars* and *Night Flight* enormously popular in French and in English, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, "Saint-Ex." as he was known to his friends, was above all a patriot whose heart began to fail with the German Occupation of 1940. Because of his mercurial temperament (he could be as gay as a cricket or as downcast as lead), it must have been exceedingly difficult to contain his spirit in the biographical form, and I do commend Curtis Cate for having written a volume which is at once dedicated and definitive.

Mr. Cate has spent most of his life in France, and in his early maturity he was the *Atlantic's* representative in Paris. There his several years of research and his hero worship have combined to create a handsome volume which will be of special interest to Francophiles and to those who were touched, however briefly, by the magnetism of "Saint-Ex."

The buoyancy of the man is incredible: he was the sole survivor of the Casa-Dakar team of the early days; he had crash-landed in the dunes of the desert and staggered back to life; he had narrowly flown the fog-bound Pyrenees, and been rescued when ditched at sea.

The strain of all these near-misses made him feel old before his time but not too old to play a commanding part in the eleventh-hour revitalization of the French Air Force. He scorned the capitulation of Pétain and Laval, and some of the most valuable passages in this book recount his outspoken opposition to the Nazis and his visit to America in 1942 to recruit help for France, "lost somewhere in the night, all lights extinguished, like a ship. Her consciousness and her spiritual life are gathered together in her depths. . . ." But he added, "It is always in the cellars of oppression that new truths are born."

Because Mr. Cate is bilingual and because he understands so clearly the sensitivity of the relations between the Free French and the Americans, the closing chapters are charged with Saint-Ex's conviction that France would be liberated though he himself was approaching the limit of his horizon.

SHORT REVIEWS: BOOKS

by Phoebe Adams

"NO ONE WILL LISSER" by Lois G. Forer. John Day, \$7.95. After more than twenty years of law practice in Philadelphia, Mrs. Forer collided for the first time with the juvenile court. She discovered that "an individual who is not a judge makes a decision whether to deprive a child of his liberty on the basis of a hearing at which none of the safeguards of the law is observed." The collision became a war, resulting in this angry and angering book. Mrs. Forer describes case after outrageous case, showing how every normal avenue for obtaining justice is systematically closed to the child whose parents cannot back him with money and knowledge. The middle-class juvenile pilferer is restored to his parents with a homily; the slum child gets a twelve-year jail sentence for illegal possession of a Tootsie Roll. Mrs. Forer writes in the hope of instigating reform, but the system she describes is so sickening that what she arouses is the impulse to instant and total destruction.

THE ALEPH AND OTHER STORIES by Jorge Luis Borges. Edited and translated by Norman Thomas di Giovanni in collaboration with the author. Dutton, \$7.95. The stories range in date from 1933 to 1969, and in subject from Argentine frontier violence to sophisticated fantasy. The book includes an autobiographical essay which reveals only Mr. Borges' reading and writing life, but does it with charming oblique humor and stimulating opinion. The translation is so good that anyone who has heard Mr. Borges lecture will hear his speaking voice again in every sentence.

MARK TWAIN: AN AMERICAN PROPHET by Maxwell Geismar. Houghton Mifflin, \$10.00. In Mr. Geismar's view, a literary critic is not automatically licensed to practice psychiatry, and he is exasperated by what amateur Freudians have made of the works of Sam Clemens, for the most part by ignoring his funny, startlingly accurate social criticisms and prognostications. Mr. Geismar

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concentrates on them, making a good case for Twain's pleasure in what he was doing and the efficiency with which he did it. Mr. Geismar also analyzes, in non-Freudian terms, the reasons for his follow critics' opinions—dirty pool, but wickedly effective.

THE MASTER OF MARY OF BURGUNDY with introduction and legends by J.J.G. Alexander. Braziller, \$20.00. A delightful facsimile version of a tiny, exquisitely illuminated Book of Hours from the fifteenth century. The text provides, tersely, a great deal of information about illuminated books in general.

WHITE DOG by Romain Gary. World, \$6.95. Mr. Gary's ironic story of the dog trained to attack blacks on sight is presumably true, for it involves well-known people (there is a tartly funny sketch of Marlon Brando up to good works) and actual events—although the dog never impinges on any of them. True or not, the tale serves as an excuse for Mr. Gary's comments on racial affairs in this country, a matter on which he is somewhat less pessimistic than the natives and a good deal more sensible.

PRIVATE by Frank D. Gilroy. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$5.95. A war novel, reduced to brainlessly simple terms and minor, disjointed incidents. It is only at the end that one realizes how subtly the author has presented the transformation of his hero from amiable, homesick civilian to wary, surly combat veteran.

WAKE UP. WE'RE ALMOST THERE by Chandler Brossard. Baron, \$7.95. One of the more peculiar creatures in this menagerie remarks, "The artist and dreams are the same thing: he is his own dream." Mr. Brossard has chosen to be everybody's dream, scooping up themes, devices, and characters from sources as diverse as Victor Hugo and Günter Grass, with the heaviest emphasis on the contemporary sexual fantasy crowd. As a world tour of literary styles, the book is remarkable. As a novel, it just chases its own tail.

WE TALK, YOU LISTEN by Vine Deloria, Jr. Macmillan, \$5.95. In addition to the intelligence, wit, and tolerance which he brings to the discussion of Indian problems, Mr.

Deloria is able to reduce Marshall McLuhan's theories on communication to a couple of lucid sentences. Any man who can do that is formidable. Mr. Deloria advocates group (that is, tribal) action to correct the many abuses which have arisen, he believes, because "American society has so functionalized itself that it is unable to function as a society." He argues that the Indian method of viewing society always as a whole, rather than dividing it into education here and highway construction there, can be profitably adopted by the rest of the population. He makes a highly interesting case.

THE GARDEN OF ALLAH by Sheilah Graham. Crown, \$5.95. It's a book, it's a film—oops, it was a Hollywood residential hotel inhabited, at one time or another, by practically everybody, including Miss Graham. She writes of the place with the solemnly indiscriminate enthusiasm proper to a gossip columnist.

OCTOBER FERRY TO GABRIOLA by Malcolm Lowry. Edited by Margerie Lowry. World, \$6.95. Lowry's death left this novel of dispossession and nostalgia unfinished, and as Mrs. Lowry points out, piecing together, however expert and devoted, cannot make it the work he intended. What survives is nonetheless well worth reading. Clearly minus a projected subplot, burdened with long passages of redundant fine writing, the book contains a wonderful section in which terror balances teasingly between the neurotic and the supernatural, collapsing at last into slapstick.

GREAT SONGS OF THE SIXTIES edited by Milton Okun with an introduction by Tom Wicker. Quadrangle, \$14.95. "Alice's Restaurant," "Moon River," "Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head," "Waist Deep In The Big Muddy"—they're all here, with guitar chords, piano setting, and lyrics in the original languages when necessary. Usably bound, too. Granted musician-ship above the Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater level, this is a fine collection.

CRISIS IN THE CLASSROOM by Charles E. Silberman. Random House, \$10.00. A large portion of Mr. Silberman's incisive study of the American school system appeared in the *Atlantic*.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

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B. Paid circulation		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	39,432	45,000
2. Mail subscriptions	288,148	328,224
C. Total paid circulation	327,580	373,224
D. Free distribution (in- cluding samples by mail, carrier or other means)	16,330	17,104
E. Total distribution (sum of C and D)	343,910	390,328
F. Office use, left-over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	52,517	37,672
G. Total (sum of E and F—should equal net press run shown in A)	396,427	428,000

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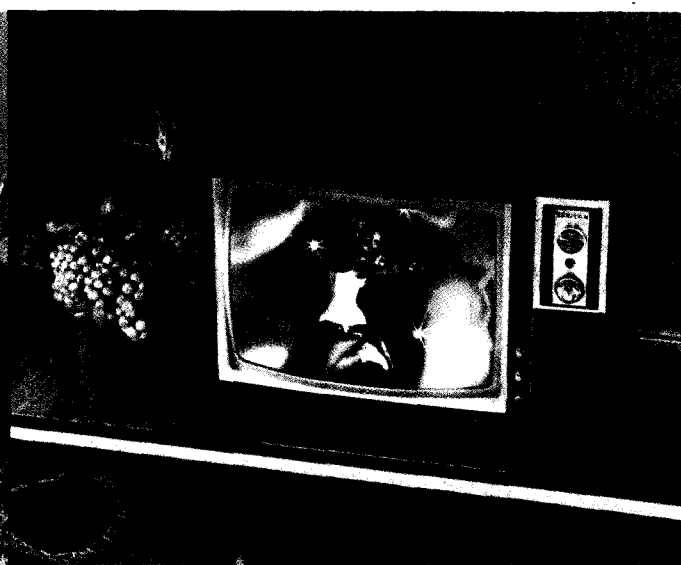
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